



# **CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL TRENDS IN THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Thesis submitted for the award of the degree of*

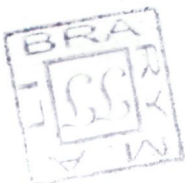
**Doctor of Philosophy**

**IN**

**WEST ASIAN STUDIES  
(POLITICAL SCIENCE)**

**BY**

**SRAWUT AREE**



**THESIS**

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**UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF**

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ALIGARH (INDIA)**

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# **Abstract**

Although the British dominated events in Egypt (1882-1936), they failed to create a genuine political community, which can be defined as one that commands allegiance as the basic moral authority for the individual. British rule succeeded instead in imposing and stabilizing a colonial authority with the aid of indigenous allies. That authority proved capable of maintaining itself, spreading its values among part of the population, and earning recognition of its legitimacy from other imperial authorities such as the French. In short, despite the heavy veils of indirect rule which at times screened British power, one recognizes in Egypt's history the process of colonization and its inevitable result: a colonial situation that led to the rise of Islamic and nationalist resistance. That recognition thus provides orientation for analysts of Egypt's contemporary ideological and political trends both in the context of reformist Islam and Liberal Nationalism and those are the primary objects of this study.

It is in the same direction that the political evolution of the post 1952 Egyptian regimes and their records in both ruling and transforming Egypt are also examined. The dynamics of Free Officers rule are characterized by studying the interplay of power, ideas and social change under Nasser and Anwar al Sadat where as discussion has been made to understand the growth of state apparatus

for channeling of political discourse in the context of governance and institution building as developed and institutionalized under Husni Mubarak.

The study also makes an elaborate discussion of social reforms and changes in critical areas of industry, agriculture and rural welfare evaluating the actual performance of the regime as clearly as available in relation to their respective political and ideological objectives. While the primary focuses of this study is on domestic development in the context of institution building and governance, internal changes are also co-related with important shifts in Egypt's global role.

The literature on contemporary Egypt is rich. But the historians, the comparative social scientists, the orientalist and who have most systematically studied Egypt for the most part have had different concerns. The answer to this fundamental question requires more than a generalized account of recent Egyptian history but a more focussed study with Egypt's traditional Islamic culture and the tasks of adjusting it to the modern world.

The present study brings a new focus: explicit analysis of the obstacles, both domestic and foreign, that Egyptians have confronted in their efforts to create the politics and administration of revolutionary social reconstruction. The general argument can be briefly stated:

- (1) Egypt's revolutionary rulers as yet have been unable to generate the institutions, systems, and relations which they themselves see as essential to the social reconstruction of their country.
- (2) Islamic activists and those who call themselves Islamic Reformers in Egypt insist that Islam can be compatible with democracy in terms of institution building, but the question of whether there is unanimity in their Islamic political agenda on society is open to debate.
- (3) There have been many causes for the failures of Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak but most critical has been the absence of institution building both in terms of organization and of ideology.
- (4) This lack of institutionalization and ideology has hampered a coherent, self-generated approach to the problems Egypt has faced since the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Basic decisions on the character of Egypt's new political-economic order, and correlative regional and international alignments, are too long delayed. Despite the domestic roots of their core motivations, Egypt's new rulers have allowed their regime to be defined to an excessive degree by the responses made to external crisis stimuli and to the counter-responses of the environment. The successive political rulers have been unable to devise and carry out the basic public policies demanded by their own vision of change.



(5) In Egypt a political-economic order has taken form that is characterized by sharply limited competence for the tasks of modernization. It is an order without secure and sound social moorings, an order in which political power is both personalized and bureaucratized. Ironically, such a system of social organization itself erects new and formidable barriers to the task set by the respective political regimes for themselves and their people: the revolutionary transformation of Egypt.

Hence, in this study an attempt has been made to examine and explore the compatibility between the Islamic movements and the dominant ideological trends generally bowed and controlled by the Egyptian elite with a view to examine the genesis of the contemporary state system in the context of changing dimension of state-society relations, weigh the claims and goals of opposition forces, and asses the prospects for reform.

In so doing, this study will concentrate on describing and analyzing five distinct areas, leading to significant conclusion about the overall phenomenon of contemporary ideological and political trends in the Arab Republic of Egypt. The areas chosen have been put in a logical order so as to lead to the central thesis of study.

In the first chapter, an attempt has been made to investigate the intellectual foundations of modern Islamic reformism in Egypt in an attempt to

grapple with what it perceived to be an intolerable state of Islamic decline in the context of growing European influence and culture. The area of concern addressed is about the nature of Governance in modern Islamic State System. In the course of this discussion, two streams emerged as dominant. The first as is believed to be revivalist in nature, advocating a return to the path set by the early Muslim rulers and the second whereby drawing its inspiration from Europe, and attempts to reconcile European and Islamic political philosophy. The overall estimation, however, is an attempt to understand a comprehensive background of modern Islamic ideologues, their various theories and related issues, as a guiding principle for the governance and state building.

Chapter two deals about the growth and development of the Egyptian society and state system especially in the first half of the twentieth century. This phase is particularly important as it witnesses the growth and emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood. This movement, as is rooted in the Islamic history, not only posed a challenge to the Westernize state system but even paved the way for the establishment of the strong foundation of the Islamic society in Egypt. Much of this chapter's readings and discussion is on the Muslim Brotherhood embodying the Islamic ideology, its rise, evolution and growth in the 1930s and 1940s.

The third chapter attempts to highlight the philosophy of Gamal Abdul Nasser in the context of nation state system. The advent of Nasser in the

political horizon of Egypt witnessed a socialist philosophy as a political ideology of the government. The chapter tries to give a description as to how Nasser utilized the Islamic adventist to carry out his philosophy in the context of Arab nationalism. The chapter also contains summary of the failure of Nasser's policy as he could not reconcile the growing demands of Islamists within the broad framework of his socialist system.

The fourth chapter focuses on the Egyptian political system, its growth and direction as projected by Anwar al-Sadat, whereby his ideology of political liberalization is discussed in terms of Egyptianism (replacing pan-Arabism) and Islam. However, this chapter also contains the emergence of contemporary Islamic activism, namely 'the Islamic Liberation Organization' and 'the Group of Muslim', with a view to delineating its system of thought and theoretical frame of reference as they emerged in Egypt.

Finally the fifth and the last chapter aspires to understand that the contemporary Islamic political activism vis-à-vis the characteristics of the nation state system in Egypt is a product of socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural conditions. These conditions are manifested in the interrelated and multifaceted crisis of development, inequality and identity over the century and produced conflicts, oppression and dependency in their wake. It is thus concluded that this ruin of religious political activism lies in the failure of

political system to deal with these problems-indeed, minimally to safeguard the internal Egyptian community and exploitation in various forms.



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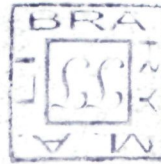
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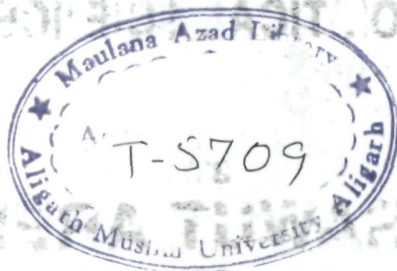
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## *Certificate*

*This is to certify that work in this thesis entitled*  
"CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL TRENDS IN THE ARAB  
REPUBLIC OF EGYPT" *is an original work of* *Graout Aree.*

*The candidate has completed the requirements of attendance. The  
present work is suitable to be submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy  
degree in the Centre of West Asian Studies, Aligarh Muslim University,  
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# **Preface & Acknowledgement**

The purpose of this study on ‘Contemporary Ideological and Political Trends in The Arab Republic of Egypt’ is not to give a modern history and contemporary trends of all kinds of thought expressed by the Egyptian scholars since the second half of the nineteenth century. The emphasis, however, is on the thoughts about politics and society within a certain context : that created by the growth of European influence and the Islamic resurgence movements calling for radical social reforms and for changes in the form of government. These movements are characterized by a strong religious component. Their calls for reform are couched in the Muslim idiom – that is, in demands for social justice (adala) and the satisfaction of man’s basic necessities, and are accompanied by demands for a return to an Islamic form of government, one that is ruled by the Shari’a. This nomenclature covers a multitude of organizations with different principles and slogans, but all have one common denominator – their reformist appeals derive from religious belief and are asserted to be founded in Muslim principles.

It is to such ideas that the word ‘contemporary’ is defined in the title – for the ideas which have influenced not only the trends about democratic institutions or individual rights, but also about national strength and unity and the power of government in the context of the growth of European power and the spread of new ideas as a challenge to which Egyptians had to respond by changing their own societies, and the systems of beliefs and values which gave them legitimacy, in a certain direction, through acceptance of some of the ideas and

institutions of modern Europe. This of course raised problems of different kinds. What should they accept? If they accept it, could they also remain true to their inherited beliefs and values? In what sense, if any, would they still remain Muslims and Arabs?

To write a history of thought demands certain choices. It is possible to deal in a general way with schools of thought, but to do so may blur the differences between individual thinkers, and impose a false unity upon their work. The other way is to lay the main emphasis on a number of individuals, chosen because they are broadly representative of certain tendencies or generations, and to explain as fully as possible the influences, the circumstances, and traits of personality which may have led them to think about certain matters in a certain way. An attempt, therefore, has been made to follow the second method, because it made it possible to relate different thinkers and movements ; such as the Ikhwan al-Muslimin (the Muslim Brotherhood), Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami (the Islamic Liberation Organization), Jama'at al-Muslimin (the Group of Muslim) and al-Jihad (Holy Struggle), and to give a chronological framework within which they could be placed.

While the many groups that have been examined as part of the contemporary Islamic political activist movement are diverse, there are a number of characteristics common to all of them. First, they are all committed to a Salafi ideology. The normative characteristics of this are puritanical moralism, collectivism and universalism. Second, the goals of these movements are politically reactionary in that the groups seek Islamization of political institutions as their primary objective. The Muslim Brotherhood is obviously in the first kind,

though its character was also tinted by that of the second, for it attempted to interpret the principles of Islam in accordance with contemporary political life.

However, some analysts may differ with an assessment based on this approach, having themselves approached the issue through the perspective of modern Western social sciences, which lend greater weight to factors such as disparity in social origin, variations in the nature of the leadership or modes of political performance, or differences in the geographical-social context in which the group emerged and developed. Thus social scientists might variously classify these groups as 'religious', 'social', 'political', or 'protest' movements, depending on the criteria they apply.

It is, therefore, this study also has an elaborate discussion of the political ideas as developed in the context of the institution building in Egypt by the respective contemporary political leaders of the state; Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak. Under Nasser this ideology was revolutionary nationalism, but thereafter the ideology of the 1952 revolution gradually replaced by a new conservative consensus that reflected the interests of an establishment with no interest in further radical change. Sadat pioneered this ideological transformation in the October Working Paper, which outlined his view of Egypt's new course after the October 1973 War, through a 'de-Nasserization' propaganda campaign; and by subsequent efforts to revive the legitimacy of capitalism and to justify his Western alignment. Sadat also sought to root legitimacy in constitutionalism and democracy.

Under Mubarak, however, democratization became the main legitimacy formula. Nevertheless, it was limited. The masses were held not to be

prepared for full-blown democracy, lacking sufficient responsibility and consciousness, they were susceptible to 'alien' (leftist) or 'Islamist' ideas. Strong presidential tutelage, the careful channeling of political discourse through regime-managed institutions, and limits on overt attempts to incite the masses was needed for the sake of social peace. By the Mubarak era, this new conservative consensus seemed to bind the elite, affecting ideological divisions.

Hence, in this study an attempt has been made to examine and explore the compatibility between the Islamic movements and the dominant ideological trends generally bowed and controlled by the Egyptian elite with a view to examine the genesis of the contemporary state system in the context of changing dimension of state-society relations, weigh the claims and goals of opposition forces, and asses the prospects for reform.

In so doing, this study will concentrate on describing and analyzing five distinct areas, leading to significant conclusion about the overall phenomenon of contemporary ideological and political trends in Egypt. The areas chosen have been put in a logical order so as to lead to the central thesis of study.

In the first chapter, an attempt has been made to investigate the intellectual foundations of modern Islamic reformism in Egypt in an attempt to grapple with what it perceived to be an intolerable state of Islamic decline in the context of growing European influence and culture. The area of concern addressed is about the nature of Governance in modern Islamic State System. In the course of this discussion, two streams emerged as dominant. The first as is believed to be revivalist in nature, advocating a return to the path set by the early Muslim rulers and the second whereby drawing its inspiration from Europe, and

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The best evidence available to me, ranging from government documents to library works to local and international newspapers and journals has been synthesized to present as accurate and through an interpretation as possible of modern and contemporary issues. But in an important sense this study remains preliminary. It is an attempt at an overall understanding of Egypt's contemporary ideological and political trends that I hope will prepare the way for a more definitive studies. Nevertheless, in presenting my general interpretation of the Egyptian political experience, I have tried to ask important questions – questions that will yield more or less lasting answers, expressed in words as attemptive as possible to broad applicability and to logical relationships.

My sincere thanks and gratitude are due to my supervisor Dr. Muhammad Gulrez for his invaluable help, guiding in every stage in the

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September 20, 2001

Aligarh

  
Srawut Aree



# **Chapter One**

## **Islamic Ideologue and Political Order in Modern Egypt**

The colonization of Egypt began with nineteenth-century commercial penetration, included direct British occupation, and ended with Egyptian nationalization of Suez Canal in 1956. Central throughout was the role of the British. For convenience their domination may be dated from 1839, when Britain intervened effectively to curtail the power of the parvenu former Albanian officers Muhammad Ali (1805-1849), who founded the last of the foreign dynasties to rule over Egyptians. Under Muhammad Ali's dynastic successors, British influence in Egypt grew in rivalry with that of the French. Direct British occupation, however, did not come until 1882, in the wake of a successful army revolt by Colonel Ahmed Urabi, the first hero of Egyptian nationalism. The year 1919 brought a second wave of nationalist revolt. Wartime conditions had contributed to the creation of serious food shortage and a staggering rate of inflation. Nationalist leaders like Sa'ad Zaghlul<sup>1</sup> gave voice to the popular resentment to foreign rule aggravated by these conditions. The rejection of Zaghlul's request for an Egyptian delegation to the Paris Conference sparked a wave of armed rebellion and strikes that paralyzed the country. Under the pressure of these nationalist disturbances

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1. Sa'ad Zaghlul was the Egyptian nationalist leader, founder of the Wafd party. He suffered both arrest (1882) and exile (1919) for his attempts to end foreign domination in Egypt. Having founded (1919) the Wafd party, he became premier in 1924, but the opposition of Great Britain and the Egyptian court soon forced him to resign. The last year of his life he served as president of the Egyptian parliament.

Britain unilaterally ended the protectorate it had established. Egypt was declared an independent monarchy in 1922.

In actuality the 1922 declaration merely veiled the continuance of British power, since its political arrangements expressly qualified Egypt's independence. Important responsibilities, including security of communications, Egyptian defense, and protection of foreign nationals in Egypt and the Sudan, were reserved to the British. A later 1936 agreement<sup>2</sup> did officially end the British occupation of Egypt and undertake to abolish the special privileges that had been guaranteed to foreigners. Nevertheless, Britain still retained the right to station troops in the Suez Canal and to fly over Egyptian territory. The agreement also provided for British defense of Egypt against aggression, in return for Egyptian assistance in a British war. These qualifications meant that one of the four major political forces in the country until the Nasserist revolution was the British—along with the Egyptian King, the Islamic reformist, and the nationalist party known as the Wafd.<sup>3</sup>

Although the British dominated events in Egypt, they failed to create a genuine political community, which can be defined as one that command allegiance as the basic moral authority for the individual. British rule succeeded

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2. An Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 was signed stipulating the withdrawal of the British troops of occupation to the Canal Zone, the relinquishing of British responsibility for the life and property of foreigners in favour of the Egyptian government and the rendition of reciprocal aid against enemies involving the use of ports, aerodromes and means of communication (Hitti, 1970:751)

3. The Wafd is the Egyptian nationalist political party, which evolved from the nationalist delegation sent by the leaders to the British in 1919 to negotiate for Egyptian independence and Anglo Egyptian relations. The Wafd, led by Ahmed Sa'ad Zaghlul until his death in 1927 and thereafter by Mustafa Nahhas, was considered the principal nationalist party. It was modernistic in internal and social matters, bourgeois-democratic in ideology and for many years fought the King and Court circles, because of their attempt to reduce parliamentary power (Shimoni and Levine, 1972).

instead in imposing and stabilizing a colonial authority with the aid of indigenous allies. That authority proved capable of maintaining itself, spreading its values among part of the population, and earning recognition of its legitimacy from their imperial authorities such as the French. In short, despite the heavy veils of indirect rule which at times screened British power, one recognizes in Egypt's history the process of colonization and its inevitable result : a colonial situation that led to the rise of Islamic and nationalist resistance.

Of course, the foreign domination of Egypt had some unique characteristics. The country was never a colony for large-scale settlement by the British, nor was the Egyptian elite ever totally excluded from political activity. To be sure, power to make the crucial decisions that determined the course of Egypt's history was reserved to the British. Still, the indigenous elite was given just enough of a taste of political power to be tantalized and kept off balance in a position of calculated inferiority not without racist overtones.

For the occupied Egyptians an understanding of the origins and consequences of British rule was crucial, since they faced a situation for which their religion and traditional culture provided little orientation. Cromer<sup>4</sup> has eloquently described the particular colonial world created in Egypt by the British presence :

**Egypt may now almost be said to form part of Europe. It is on the high road to the Far East. It can never cease to be an object of interest to all the Powers Europe, and especially to England. A numerous and intelligent body of Europeans and of non-Egyptian Orientals have made Egypt their home. European capital to a large**

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4. Lord Cromer was the powerful British proconsul from 1882 to 1907, best recorded the racist underside of British colonial rule.

extent has been sunk in the country. The rights and privileges of Europeans are jealously guarded, and moreover, give rise to complicated questions, which it requires no small amount of ingenuity and technical knowledge to solve. Exotic institutions have sprung up and have taken root in the country (Cromer, 1908:326).

However, to understand the Egyptian Islamic ideologues and nationalist revolutionaries (and the modern-day heirs of their legacy), one must grapple with this colonized Egypt depicted by Cromer. For the Egyptian, such an Egypt constituted a new, 'exotic', and profoundly disorienting situation. Behavior could no longer reliably be guided by traditional patterns. The Egyptian culture in isolation no longer existed; it had been shattered as a coherent whole by the process of British colonization. To be sure, fragments of the cultural past survived - important fragments such as religious beliefs and patterns of interpersonal relations. Egyptians naturally sought refuge in those fragments in their time of troubles. Some even sought to piece them together in creative responses to their situation, as in new religious movements, for example.

Equally important was history's confirmation of the colonial situation as an objectively verifiable reality characterized not only by the damming of nationalist aspirations but also by the destruction of Egypt's past. The Islamic belief system was disrupted and was no longer congruent with experienced social life.

In their religious thought and political action, nationalist Egyptians attempted to deal with the shattering impact of the British presence. Egyptian intellectuals were concerned even during the period of direct British occupation to provide their community with a new basis for legitimate, indigenous political

authority. Two orientations competed for the loyalties of the intellectuals: reformist Islam and liberal nationalism. Both were moderate; that is, both compromised with British power. These ideological thought thus can be summarized emphasizing the relevancy of their ideas to the society and state's aspiration for a better place in the world order.

### **Intellectual Influences Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905)**

Muhammad 'Abduh was an Egyptian who played a fundamental role along with Rashid Rida and 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq in formulating an Islamic response to the twin problems of domestic development and Western imperialism. 'Abduh was born in Egypt in 1849 and educated at al-Azhar university, the centre of higher Islamic studies in the Muslim world. A close friend and ideological ally of al-Afghani, 'Abduh struggled for revolution in Egypt. He was deeply rooted in the traditions of his own country, and the nationalist element was important in his thought from the beginning. He was always conscious that the common history and interests of those who lived in the same country created a deep bond between them in spite of different faith. The sense of the importance of the unity, which affected his view of Islamic reform, coloured also his view of the nation. Unity, he maintained, was necessary in political life, and the strongest type of unity was that of those who shared the same country – not only the place they lived in, but the locus of their public rights and duties, the object of their affection and pride (Hourani, 1983:156).

'Abduh's thinking has influenced and has given rise to two main trends of thought- the speculative modernists who, in their more extreme form, are outright secularists,<sup>5</sup> and the conservative orthodox, though he was essentially a speculative modernist. His starting point was orthodox, though tinged with his Egyptianianness. The umma in general, and Egyptian nation in particular, was in a state of internal decay ; but although he subscribed in part to the traditional and orthodox view that the cause of the decay lay in the failure of Muslims to stick to the right path and that the remedy was to return to pure unadulterated Islam, he also recognized that 'as circumstances changed, society and its rulers inevitably found themselves faced with problems not foreseen in the prophetic message, and acting in ways which might even appear to contradict it' (Quoted in Hourani, 1983:136). In particular, he perceived three major problem areas. First, there was the division of Islam into opposing sects, each believing that it alone held the true message. Second, he recognized the difficulty of acknowledging the true nature of Islam in view of the complexities introduced into it by intellectuals through the ages. Third he saw a need to reconcile and re-unite the two main strands in Muslim and Egyptian thinking : the traditional, which offered stagnation, slavish imitation of Muslim tradition, and resistance to change ; and the modernist/secularist, which offered uncritical acceptance of Western ideas and culture almost to the exclusion of the indigenous cultural and intellectual environment. The third and last was, in

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5. In fact, persons like Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872-1964), Taha-Hussein (b.1189), Muhammad Husayn Haykal (1888-1956), Ibrahim al Mazni (1889-1949), and Sa'ad Zaghlul was greatly influenced by 'Abduh's polemics of Islamic modernism and by no means were secularist, but rather they were looking for a more liberalized version of Islamic modernism. It is equally notable that the political behaviour of the Wafd, -a liberal, secular, nationalist party by Western account, were not guided by the secular considerations as shown by their speeches, debates, and discussions in the Egyptian parliament over the issue of Shari'a and the abolition of caliphate by Kemal Ataturk (Safran, 1961:108-121).

his view, the most important. He could see both the positive and negative aspects of both approaches and sought to bridge the intervening gulf and in so doing to strengthen the moral roots of Muslim and Egyptian society. The way forward, he believed, lay not in rigid adherence to either trend, but in recognizing the inevitability of changes. It was not, however, a question of change for change's own sake, but of changes linked indissolubly to the principles of Islam-changes which were 'not only permitted by Islam, but were indeed its necessary implications if it was rightly understood' (Hourani, 1983:139).

'Abduh aimed to convince the secularists that Islam was a valid guide to life and the conservatives that there was nothing in the trappings, values, and institution of Western-inspired modernity and modernization which was inherently inconsistent with Islam. This complex may be conveniently reduced to a two-fold objective : first, to restate what Islam really is ; and second, to reconcile Islam, so defined and developing society. However, to Muhammad 'Abduh, the former was considerably more important than the latter. In his fragmentary autobiography, he commented that he had striven to rid Muslim intellectualism of blind imitation and to promote an understanding of Islam as the early community understood it. This involved a return to original sources, recourse to rational intellectual thought, and a reconciliation between Islam and the sciences which, collectively, would permit the attainment of the social order prescribed by God (Bannerman, 1988:131).

However, the primary concerns of 'Abduh were with nation-building and British imperialism. To strengthen the national will against foreign

encroachment, he advocated the adoption of several basic principles as the basis for nation-building :

1. government as a civil rather than religious institution;
2. sectarianism as a divisive political and social force to be suppressed in civil society;
3. education as a necessity for a civil society.

‘Abduh considered these to be the essential characteristics of the Western nations, but not necessarily peculiar to them, for these same characteristics were legitimated within Islam (Ismael, Tareq Y. and Ismael, Jacqueline S., 1985:29).

To forestall the advance of Western imperialism, ‘Abduh advocated the reform and renewal of the Khalafah<sup>6</sup> in the framework of the Ottoman empire, ‘Abduh considered Khalafah to be a de facto reality existing in political circumstances dominated by European imperial encroachment toward the East, the Muslim homeland. He had great hopes that this reality could be exploited to hinder imperialist expansion in these lands.

Muhammad ‘Abduh was, at the same time, anxious to introduce European notions of Political authority, administration and bureaucracy. These notions were supposed to be translated into technical devices that would complement the diffusion of knowledge and act as safety valves against regression or violation of proper governance. It was therefore thought that once the institutions of the state were reformed, society would be set on a course of renewal and arrival. These reforms were, moreover, to be accomplished between a ruler

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6. Khalafah is the institution of government legitimized by succession of the Ruler from the Prophet Muhammad



and his subjects, whereby the former would willingly heed the advice of enlightened religious leaders and state officials. Islamic decline became in this context the ineluctable result of oriental despotism'. The dichotomy of an advancing West confronting a declining East entered the field of ideological argumentation, revealing despotism as the main culprit responsible for the neglect of science or the requisites of true education. 'Abduh expressed this trend in the following way :

**I look upon myself to plead the cause of two great issues. The first was the liberation of thought from the shackles of blind imitation, and the comprehension of religion according to the rulers laid down, before the emergence of conflict, by the ancestors of the community, and the return, in acquiring religious knowledge, to the original sources, considering them in the light of human reason. The second issue was the reform of the Arabic language.... The other issue that I espoused...and is the pillar of social life was the differentiation between the entitlement of government to obedience from the people, and the people's right to justice from their government. Yes, I was one of those who called upon the Egyptian nation to recognized its right over its ruler - a suggestion that had not occurred to it obedience is obligatory, is only a human being, liable to err and be overwhelmed by his whims, and that nothing can dissuade him from his error and check the preponderance of his whims except the advice that the nation proffers him by word and deed (Quoted in Choueiri, 1990:38).**

Thus there was for him a balance between the ruler's right to obedience and his obligation to provide justice to his people.

Muhammad 'Abduh's views on political institutions and forms of government however are less clear, partly because he found politics distasteful. His concept of the ideal government was similar to the classical jurists' concepts :

there should be a just ruler who rule in accordance with the law and in consultation with the people. However, he not only accepted temporal plurality but was also deeply influenced by his sense of being Egyptian, both matters which had to be reconciled with the universal umma (The Islamic community).<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, he defined the unity of the umma as a moral unity within which political plurality was accepted; but there should also be a restored Khalafah, though he seems ambivalent about its proper functions. On the one hand, he has argued that it should have spiritual functions and spiritual authority only, even suggesting that there should be 'a chief of our Egyptian nation, acting under the religious sovereignty of the Caliphate' (Hourani,1983:156). On the other hand, he argues that 'the traditional constitution theory of the Caliphate in Islam, in its positive manifestations as distinct from its religious, is as much a system of civil law as the Western secular type' and that 'the Caliph was simply the political head of the community, he was not its Pope. He did not have the power or the position of the chief priest nor did he have the exclusive right of interpreting the will of God' (Kerr, 1966:48 ; Badawi, 1978:48).

He rarely concerned himself with structures, although he did suggest, in response to a question posed in 1904, that some form of limited constitutional monarchy in which legislative authority rested with a representative assembly

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7. umma is the religio-political community of all Muslims, which during the Apostolic Age and the period of the Four orthodox caliphs embraced the political empire of Islam as well as the total body of believers. Membership in such a religious community, as in the parallel case of medieval European "Christianitas", was the equivalent of "nationality", since from the ecumenical religious standpoint, ethnic descent and geographical origin were accidents of history and had nothing to do with one's place in the hierarchy of Creation. During the later centuries of Islam, when the Islamic world was divided into numerous, often mutually hostile, political divisions, the "Umma Muhammadiyya" – the "Umma of Muhammad" – remained the constant factor, while the frequent change of boundaries and dynasties were regarded as passing ephemera (Wendell, 1978:170).

would be appropriate. This was clearly a long-term objective, however, the achievement of which could only come after suitable training. There is no doubt that he had a clearly defined ideal: 'a Muslim community bound together by a fraternal spirit and a sense of common fortunes, interests, and goals'. However, he developed no detailed scheme for achieving it and considered it could only be achieved after major social and educational reforms had been instituted. For him, the structure for an Islamic government 'did exist in the Golden Age of early Islam, and can exist again when Muslim society is again transformed, but it is this transformation and not the political system it will facilitate that is his real concern' (Kerr, 1966:152).

'Abduh's Islamic modernist model increasingly came to be identified with the Western notions of nationalism, liberalism, constitutionalism, and later on, socialism but its ideological justification was found in the Islamic doctrine. In fact, the whole ideological expression of this model vis-à-vis the Western model of liberal democracy and socialism was marked by its 'apologetically' character a tendency to demonstrate that Islam possesses all those 'best elements' which have made the European states so progressive and dominant.

Writing in 1881, Muhammad 'Abduh thought that, in so far as political life was concerned, the Egyptians were still in their infancy. This was premised on his division of human development into three stages: natural, social and political. The first was essentially instinctive, having as its main purpose the basic needs of human beings such as food and shelter. The second involved the struggle for self-preservation and the survival of the species, two activities necessitating co-operation and congregation. While the first two tendencies were

strictly inborn abilities, the third became viable only as a result of hard learning and long experience. It was for this reason that Muslims longing for freedom needed 'a wise guide and educator', and whom 'Abduh identified as none other than the Khedive of Egypt, Tawfiq. Political science was thus an artificial skill, and a talent acquired after diligent practice applied by a selected number of people. Egypt could not adopt a full-fledged constitutional government for generations to come. It was imperative that a political elite should first be formed. This elite, before entertaining the ambition of leading the nation, ought to formulate a clear objective and achieve an indissoluble national unity. The determination of a specific end had to precede all the required means for its achievement. Such a condition obtained in the developed European nations. In other words, loyalty to the fatherland took precedence over all differences of opinion and competing the ideologies.

'Abduh's line of reasoning was based on the premises of speculative and dialectic theology ('ilm al-kalam), particularly the rationalist school of Mu'tazilism that flourished in Baghdad under the 'Abbasids. According to the Mu'tazilites, there were two types of knowledge: necessary ('ilm daruri) and acquired ('ilm muktasab). However, 'Abduh departed from classical Islamic philosophy and political theorization by stressing the characteristics of the body politic as a process of humanly-devised institutions and concepts.

Having posited national affiliation as the focus of political activities, and the fatherland as the location of individual rights and duties, 'Abduh differentiated between tyranny, on the one hand, and autocracy, on the other. To him, the first was forbidden by the religious law (Shari'a), while the second was

not, since the execution of law by one person was permitted by both religion and human reason. However, he believed that rebellion against unjust rulers was legitimate so long as it does not bring greater disasters in its wake. In other words, the potential rebel must weigh carefully his chances of success before embarking on the act of rebellion. He must do so not merely to save his neck but also to save his soul. For it seems as a logical consequence of this view that failure in a noble endeavor is more sinful than not endeavoring at all. Perhaps 'Abduh was not thinking on these lines. He may have had in mind to express the importance of careful weighing of the consequences of rebellion so that legitimate rebellion may not become a license. Otherwise the whole fabric of political life would disintegrate and anarchy prevail.

For the issue concerning the separation between religion and state, 'Abduh believed that this separation of the West was simply a separation between institution. It was not intended for the abandonment of their religion (Christianity). Thus the suggestion of separating Islam from politics would be tantamount to abandoning Islam itself, as there is no separate institution equivalent to the Church for the Muslim religion. To deprive the Muslim community of the support of the political aim of their society to the tenets of their religion is to abolish the religion itself (Badawi, 1978:49). As noted earlier, 'Abduh was willing to incorporate Western institutions into the body politic of Islam. In so doing, he opened the way for political development within the Muslim community without the need for heart-searching. Political reform, he contended, is in accordance with the true spirit of Islam. The early Muslims employed institutions suitable to their time and

conditions; but Islam as a timeless religion must permit of various forms to fulfil the aims of its principles.

## **Muhammad Rashid Rida (1895-1935)**

In the troubled conditions after the First World War, there was a sharp debate in Egypt on the political system best suited for the country. The crux of the debate was whether the classical pervasive character of Islam was to be accepted to allow its supremacy in all spheres of social life, or to moderate its influence. In this debate between Islamism and secularism, pristine Islam provided the principal source of inspiration to the former, and the nineteenth century secular ideology of the West to the latter, which however did not renounce Islam as a religion. The foremost proponent of this line of Islamic thinking was however Muhammad Rashid Rida.<sup>8</sup> Born in Tripoli in 1865, he pursued religious studies and journalism in Syria until 1897, when he moved to Cairo. There he established a periodical, al-Manar, through which he disseminated, interpreted and elaborated on the ideas of Muhammad 'Abduh and others. Rida's main contribution to Islamic political thought was his dissemination of the ideas of al-

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8. For the life and thought of Rashid Rida, see especially Arslan Shakib (1937), Rashid Rida aw ikha' arbain Sana : Cairo ; Adams, Charles (1933) Islam and Modernism in Egypt, London ; Hourani, Albert (1962) Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, Oxford University press ; Kerr, Malcolm H. (1966) Islamic Reform : The Political and legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida ,Berkeley and Los Angeles : University of California Press ; ash-Sharabasi, Ahmad (1970) Rashid Rida sahib al-Manar, Cairo : Matabi al-Ahram al-Tijariyyah.

Afghani<sup>9</sup> and ‘Abduh, the two foremost modernization reformers. He also championed the cause of the Wahhabi doctrine<sup>10</sup> in his journal.

Unlike Muhammad ‘Abduh, Rida and his followers restricted the term al-slaf al-salih (the pious elders of forefathers) to the first generation who had known the prophet personally. Rida’s starting point was a modification of the by now familiar attribution of the backwardness and weakness of the Muslim world to deviation and corrupt practices. He also rejected the argument of the ‘secularists’ that the main obstacle to progress was Islam itself. He commented:

**The Muslim say that it is religion that was the cause of their sovereignty and well being and that turning away from it was what landed them in misery and caused misery to descend upon them.... But most of them say this without understanding, imagining that there is an irrational secret in religion which enables believers to attain victory and power and gives them success by miracles and special blessing (Quoted in Kerr, 1966:155).**

He then outlined the contrary argument which concluded that ‘the greatest obstacle in the path of Muslim progress is the Islamic religion itself and that if they (the Muslim) abandon it they can hope to follow in the footsteps of Europe and progress as she did’ (Kerr, 1966:156). This was to him arrant nonsense, if not dangerous heresy, since ‘the teaching and moral precepts of Islam are such that, if they are properly understood and fully obeyed, they will lead to success in this world as well as the next-and to success in all the forms in which

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9. For al-Afghani’s Islamic political thought see Appendix P.213

10. Wahhabi movement (1703-1878) appeared in the Arabian peninsula under the banner of Muhammad Ibn’Abd al-Wahhab. ‘Abd al-Wahhab denounced the Ottoman Empire (1300-1918) and, after many efforts, saw his exegesis – based on Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya – become all-powerful. Like them, ‘Abd al-Wahhab called for a return to the original sources of Islam and an uprooting of the undesirable innovations.

the world understands it, strength, respect, civilization and happiness. If they are not understood and obeyed, weakness, decay, barbarism are the results'. This is true not only of individuals but of communities. According to Rashid Rida:

**Today reason for this backwardness is that the Muslim have lost the truth of their religion, and this has been encouraged by bad political rulers, for the true Islam involves two things, acceptance of the unity of God and consultation in matters of State, and despotic rulers have tried to make Muslims forget the second by encouraging them to abandon the first. But what happened in the past can happen again: Islamic civilization was created out of nothing by the Qur'an and the moral precepts enshrined in it, and can be re-created if Muslims return to the Qur'an. It is irrelevant to say that modern civilization rests on technical advance, and that Islamic civilization cannot be revived so long as the Muslims are technically backward; technical skill is potentially universal, and its acquisition depends on certain moral habits and intellectual principles. If Muslims had these, they would easily obtain technical skill ; and such habits and principles are in fact contained in Islam (Quoted in Hourani, 1983:228).**

The real problem, he believed, lay in ignorance and neglect on the part of rulers and religious leaders, as a result of which corrupt practices and accretions had become the norm. The solution was simple, since basic beliefs, moral and ethical teachings, correct religious practice, and the general principles governing social and other relationships had been established during Muhammad's lifetime, as had the moral principles of legal and governmental practices and regulations. All that was needed, therefore, was a return to the practice 'of the early days of the first four Caliphs, whose Sunnah, together with his own Sunnah, the prophet commanded Muslims to hold fast to and they should lay aside everything that has been introduced into Islam that is contrary to that Practice' .



Throughout his thinking both in relation to Islamic belief system and to state craft, Rida remained traditional and orthodox in many respects. In his opinion, Jihad (the duty to wage war against non-Muslims) is always lawful in defence of Islam but is only lawful as a means of spreading Islam when the peaceful dissemination of Islam through missionary activity is forbidden or when Muslims are prevented from living in accordance with Muslim law. To use force to compel the ‘people of the book’ to become Muslims would infringe this same principle of freedom in the faith.

Rida’s legal thinking was his perception that a system of law could be both appropriate to the age and yet still truly Muslim. However, since a system of law implies the existence of an authority to enforce its provisions, he also turned his attention to political structure. His views were set out comprehensively in a long treatise originally published in serial form in Al-Manar and later issued as al-khilafa aw al imama al udhma (The Caliphate or the Supreme Imamate). The treatise was in part a reaction to the Turkish reduction of the Ottoman Caliphate to a purely ceremonial and spiritual office with no political authority;<sup>11</sup> but Rida’s concern was to discuss ‘the place of the Caliphate as a system of government among other systems and its history and what should be done in this day and age’ (Badawi, 1978:120). Rida was a staunch supporter of the classical doctrine, though with some adjustments to meet changing circumstances. It is important to bear in mind, however, that he was not a ‘reformer’ or a ‘modernist’ as those terms

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11. Ever since Ataturk dissolved the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 in his drive for secularization, Islamists have viewed the revival of the Caliphate – the divinely appointed succession to the Prophet and the ideal form of state leadership – as essential to the revival and political resurgence of Islam.

are generally constructed: his aim was purification and he believed firmly in the necessity for the re-establishment of the Khalafah. However, it had to be a different form of Khalafah in as much as he recognized the practical impossibility of re-uniting the disparate and divided elements of the umma into a single polity.

The function of the Khalafah had to be redefined, therefore, and this he proceeded to do, although he fails to deal adequately and consistently with the relationship between temporal and spiritual power and authority. On the one hand, he defines the powers of 'those who loose and bind' and 'those in authority' as comprising the powers of election and deposition of the Khalafah, representation of the umma and its rights, participation through consultation in political decisions and administration, and authoritative determination of the law. The Khalafah, in effect, their nominee, with responsibility for directing the affairs of the community and for acting as chief interpreter of the law. Thus, he sought to stress the temporal aspects of the Khalafah's role, arguing that his function is:

**to protect the Faith and its adherents and to enforce the ordinances of the Shari'a. He is not empowered over the people in religious matters nor has he independent authority to determine the Shari'a ordinances for them. His task is only to maintain order and enforce the law. Thus his power is civil and subject to consultation, not absolute or exclusive (Quoted in Kirr, 1966:177).**

On the other hand, in discussing the direction of religious and cultural matters in his revive Kalafah, spiritual authority has a positive role, and he clearly sees it as the ultimate controller of temporal authority. His argument seems to rest on the traditional position that the Prophet had no spiritual successor in the sense of one who enjoys infallibility in the interpretation of doctrine, who is absolute, and who can make new doctrine. Nevertheless, the Khalafah does in fact have spiritual

authority in the sense of being the leader of the community, while his temporal authority is a prerequisite for a truly Muslim polity, having been ‘established by God in the general interest in order to assure the application of the Shari’a’(Rosenthal, 1965:122).

Thus according to Adams, it is clear that Rida’s political thought is, in essence, theoretical and idealist . He pays little attention to the practical structures of government. To some extent he seems to regard the institutional identity of ‘those who bind and loose’ and ‘those in authority’ as tantamount to the establishment of a form of representative power and authority, but he does not suggest in any way that they might be elected or might be in any way responsive to the general public only to the public interest, which is a very different thing. Nor does he address the political structure in existing Muslim polities. Notwithstanding these and criticisms, he was and remains an important figure in Egyptian conservative intellectualism despite the fact that he and his followers, the ‘Moderate Party’, as he like to call them, were small in number, no more than ‘a little group of the first reformers and a few of the later generation’.

## **A Survey of Religion and The Transformation of The State**

A plausible generalization is the observation that by the middle of eighteenth century religion was in retreat in Egypt. However, it was at the same time that Muhammad Ali, and his grandson, Khedive Isma’il, pursued a massive process of modernization. The transformation and expansion of governmental

functions to the advantage of central power occurred at the expense of traditional social and economic institutions, including those under the guidance, supervision, or control of the various religious institutions and their establishment. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century such areas of national life as education, the legal and judicial system (legislation and the courts), religious endowments and charitable trusts (waqfs) had been brought under the control of central government, that is, under secular authority. Traditional religious education in the Azhar and its institutions as well as village schools (Kuttabas), though still conducted by religious teachers, was itself subjected to greater governmental control. State primary, secondary, and higher education grew with curricula modeled along European lines, until it overtook and, in the main, superseded the traditional institutions of learning. Secular state legislation, comprising decrees, ordinances, and legal codes proliferated for the regulation of all aspects of national life: commercial civil, penal, and eventually constitutional. It gave rise to system of secular national courts. The jurisdiction of the Shari'a courts, operating on the basis of the religious law, was systematically whittled down until it encompassed matters of personal status only. This corrosive process led naturally to the relegation of religion in the affairs of state (Vatikiotis P.J., 1983:57).

According to Nadave Safran (1961:8) these overall socio-economic political, legal and educational changes during the nineteenth century led to a complete transformation of the basic character of the life and organization of Egyptian society. Indeed the nineteenth century state sponsored reforms and its attempt to dominate over religious establishment though reduced the political

influence of religious establishment, still did not eliminate the influence of religion over the psyche of common masses. Islam remained a basic organizing unit of social life in the Egyptian society. Its capacity of mass mobilization was used by all shades of politicians-religious, semi-secular and secular, during the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle.

The Islamic reform movements of the late nineteenth century appeared unable to arrest this retreat of religion, first, because they were apologetic and therefore intellectually feeble, second, because they failed to appeal to any powerful group in society who could challenge the actions of the state or ruler, and third, because of foreign power, Britain, was in ultimate control by virtue of its occupation of the country. The new native political elite, the ruling class, who emerged at the turn of the century was attracted by, and seemed committed to, a borrowed secularism. And though the religious reformers failed, on the one hand, to defeat this secularism or at least arrest it by offering their own viable alternative, the secularists simply did not bother with the eventually problematic contradiction between their newly adopted secularism and the native religious tradition, on the other. In this weakness of both traditionalists and secularists lay the seeds of future difficulties.

In the absence of a secular formula or consensus, a succession of rulers and regimes moreover continued to use religion for political purposes, either in order to legitimize their actions and policies or to compete for power symbolically or apologetically in the face of adversity. Any serious attempt either to remove religion completely from the affairs of state, or to use religion as a basis of political identity, or as a regulating principle for the political community

generated serious political crisis and/or social and political turmoil. The fierce debates in parliament and the press about the sources of legislation for the state in the mid-twenties was one example. The further reform of the Waqf was another. Two institutions, one actual, the other theoretical, became issues of great political controversy in the matter of religion and state. Thus the further reform of the Azhar and its institutions became an explosive political issue in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Control over these institutions was contested by the monarch and his courtiers against the inroads of party politicians (Vatikiotis, 1983:59). After opting for a secular state, but without actually resolving the role of religion in the political order, Egyptians were confronted with the fearsome experience of religious politics.

This transition was accompanied by a change in the nature of local nationalism, led by Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid and the Umma Party, from a movement of intellectuals associated mainly with the large landlord families to a populist movement. The new brand of nationalism under the guidance of Saad Zaghlul was manifested in the revolt he led against the British in 1919 in conjunction with the Wafd, which was viewed as a revolution by all Egyptians, especially by the intellectuals. The 1919 revolt played a key role in promoting the notion of Egyptian territorial nationalism, which had been enhanced by 100 years of autonomy from Istanbul. Two other landmarks on the road to independence were the unilateral British declaration of Egyptian independence in 1922, and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1923.

The issue of religion and state, however, remained unresolved in Egypt. Despite the internationalization of national liberal values on the part of the

political elite, the role of religion and its institutions was not confronted by them, as it was by Mustafa Kemal in Turkey. On the contrary, traditional education in the Kuttab (Islamic elementary school) or al-Azhar, as was the case for Zaghlul, supported the continued prevalence of Islamic principles as the guiding moral code of society. Egyptian society and culture, therefore, developed in a state of contrasting co-existence, that is, change alongside tradition, as articulated in the 1923 constitution (Hatina, 2000:36).

Clauses 3 and 12 of the constitution established full equality and freedom of religion. Yet, according to Islam, no equality can exist between Muslims and Dhimmis (protected minorities), while freedom of belief is also denied, since the Shari'a mandates a death sentence for any Muslim who converts to another faith. Clause 23 and 24 defined the people as the source of authority and give parliament full power of legislation ; while Clause 149 designated Islam as the official religion of the state without clarification. As befits a Shari'a-controlled state, Allah, and not the people or their representatives, is the source of authority and legislation.<sup>12</sup>

Although Clause 149 appeared toward the end of the text of the constitution, this should not be interpreted as signifying a marginal position for Islam in Egypt's new parliamentary government for several reasons. First, the lower-profile position of Clause 149 did not put an end to the public debate over the status of religion in the state which flared up in the early 1920s. On the contrary, Clause 149 was frequently quoted by al-Azhar in support of opposition

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12. For the complete text of the constitution of 1923, see Devis, H. Miller (1953) Constitutions, Electoral Laws, Treaties of States in the near and Middle East, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Durham : NC

to the disparagement of religion and its institutions. Second, a written constitution is only as effective as its implementation, which is subject to legislators and jurists. In the Egyptian context these governmental branches tended to display caution and pragmatism on all issues concerning laws, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, out of an awareness of Islam's entrenched position in society. Third inasmuch as the King was invested with the authority to supervise religious institutions and appoint their administrators (Clause 153), thereby enhancing his political power, al-Azhar mounted a campaign to elevate the King's status to Caliph (Hatina, 2000:37).

The inherent ambiguity in the clauses pertaining to religion derived, to a considerable degree, from the participation of figures with conservative world views in the preliminary constitutional committee (Kedourie, 1968:350-352). The most prominent committee member was Shaykh Muhammad Bakhit, the former mufti (Religious leader) of Egypt, who led the implacable opposition to the constitutional recognition of freedom of religious belief, claiming that it would elicit the emergence of deviant views in society which would compromise the status of the monotheistic religions. Instead, he proposed the terminology absolute freedom of belief (*hurriyyat al-I'tiqad mutlaqa*). When asked by a member of the committee if this included freedom of religious belief, Bakhit answered: 'Belief is one thing and religion is another. Muslims are divided into 73 different groups. Each group has a specific belief despite the fact that they all belong to the same religion'. His proposal was supported by the Coptic Patriarch Johannes and was subsequently adopted unanimously by the committee (Hatina 2000:37).



The varied legal contradictions in the constitution concerning the status of Islam vis-à-vis the state, the monarchy and the newly emerging parliamentary government revealed the constitution to be the product of government decree rather than evolutionary process. This was plain to various Egyptian commentators at the time, such as Muhammad Husayn Haykal, who, in a conversation with a British official in 1926, observed that the constitution had come at too early a stage in Egypt's political development (Vatikiotis, 1987:3; Hatina, 2000:37). Indeed, the popularity of liberal nationalism in Egypt was primarily a political phenomenon rather than a widespread ideology. It was associated with the struggle for independence, but failed to enlist the commitment of society to its essence. This had the profound effect of limiting intellectual discourse in Egypt between the two World Wars on matters of faith.

The key figures to conduct this discourse, while coming from varied educational and social backgrounds, belonged to the same generation, witnesses to the socio-political changes that took place in Egypt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They included such writers as Taha Husayn, 'Abd al-Gadir al-Mazini, Ahmad Amin, Muhammad Husayn Haykal and Tawfiq al-Hakim. Their thinking was rooted in loyalty to the concept of an independent Egyptian entity and in the belief in rationalism, national sovereignty and civil liberty. Much of their writing focused on a new projection of Egyptian history with emphasis on its Pharaonic heritage rather than its Islamic heritage. They aimed to portray Egypt in terms of a new collective image based on territoriality along with openness to

modernity (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986:89-95).<sup>13</sup> Yet, they never actually dissociated themselves politically from their Islamic heritage, which suggested that complete secularization (in terms of excluding religion from public affairs rather than atheism) was neither possible nor desirable, especially in the context of national coalescence and state building.

Nevertheless, among the representative thinkers of the time, Ali ‘Abd al-Raziq had a significant impact on contemporary Islamic thought by serving to stimulate new approaches to the problems of government in Islam.

### **‘Ali ‘Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966)**

‘Ali ‘Abd al-Raziq, who came from a land-owning family, was the son of the first president of the Umma Party, the forerunner of the Liberal Constitutionalist Party. Educated in al-Azhar and briefly at Oxford University, where he studied economics and political science (1912-1913), he returned to Egypt and was appointed as a judge in the Shari’a Court of Mansura. In 1925 he published the book al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm (‘Islam and the Sources of political Authority’), which dealt with the question of the normative political order in the Muslim world and held that Islam was purely a religion, with no application to temporal governance. This aroused sharp criticism in al-Azhar, citadel of religious conservatism, which soon revoked ‘Abd al-Raziq’s certificate of Alim (religious

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13. On the role of tradition in modern nationalist movement see Hobsbawn, Eric (1983) ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’, in Hobsbawn and Ranger, Terence (eds), The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

scholar) and forced his resignation from his post as judge (Hatina, 2000:38).

Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm was written against the background of two major issues involving the relationship between religion and state: The ongoing efforts by Egyptian nationalist thinkers from the end of the nineteenth century to entrench politics as a secular autonomous area of activity free from theological considerations, and capable of nurturing an Egyptian nation-state; and the specific issue of the Caliphate and the alleged necessity for Muslims to revive it, which became the focus of public debate both within and outside Egypt following Ataturk's abolition of the institution in 1924. Political elements in Egypt led by the King and vigorously supported by al-Azhar advocated its renewal.

'Abd al-Raziq's book was concentrated on two fold: first, the prophet was a spiritual rather than a political leader, and his role consisted of transmitting the divine message and effecting religious unification; second, the Caliphate was dispensable for Muslims, since it is not part of Islamic doctrine. On the contrary, the historical record of the Caliphate proves that it had been superfluous to the preservation of the faith, and had only caused damage to the Muslims. This allowed Muslims to express political allegiance to separate state unite and define their worldly affairs according to the customs prevailing in the modern world namely the adoption of liberal democracy (Hatina, 2000:39).

'Al-Raziq maintained that Islam never decided a particular form of government, and that the Muslims were never required to follow a particular system. The Khalafah was never a religious system, and the Qur'an did not alluded to it or order it. In fact, the Khalafah had paralysed development in the form of

government among Muslims. He ever maintain that the Prophet did not have the intention of forming a government or establishing a state. The Khalafah in Islam, Abd al-Raziq contended, was 'base on nothing but brutal force' (al-Raziq,1972:129). The virtue of Muslims does not depend on the Khalafah which was 'a catastrophe that hit Islam and the Muslims and is a source of evil and corruption'(al-Raziq,1972:136).

At the time he published his book, the Sultan of Egypt was attempting to bestow on himself the title of Khalife – a position which was then vacant due to the abolition of the Ottoman Khalafah – in order to protect and legitimize his rule. Being unable to explicitly state that the characteristics necessary for a Khalife did not apply to the Sultan, Abd al-Raziq opposed the move indirectly by attacking the institution of the Khalafah and the tradition of Islamic scholarship which supported it, rather than the Sultan himself. Thus, al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm met with strong opposition from leading al-Azhar Ulama, and was ultimately rejected by Egypt's political elite (Hourani, 1983:188-192). 'Abd al-Raziq's supporters (primarily, the Liberal Constitutionalist Party, whose ministers even resigned from the government in protest against 'Abd al-Raziq's dismissal), based their stand on the constitutional protection of freedom of expression and not on religious arguments. They focused their charges against the Wafd Party, whose leader, Sa'ad Zaghlul, had questioned 'Abd al-Raziq's religious qualifications and justified the sanction against him by pointing to al-Azhar's authority to denounce anyone in its ranks who renounced the 'principles of religion'. Later, however the fear of damaging the foundations of the constitutional system and playing into the hands of the palace prompted the Wafd press, too, to advocate protection of

freedom of thought in Egypt (Gershoni and Jankowski, 1986:66). Al-Azhar, gratified by its demonstration of power, confirmed the linkage of Islam to the Egyptian state in the letter of thanks to the King for his protection of the faith and the honor of its spokesmen. Ultimately, however, al-Azhar's efforts to restore the Caliphate and install it in Egypt failed in light of the poor results achieved by the Islamic Congress in 1926 (Kramer, 1986:100-101). 'Abd al-Raziq himself, the hero of the Caliphate episode, continued to write publicist material defending democratic values such as openness, tolerance and freedom, and served as the editor of al-Rabita al-Sharqiyya ('The Eastern Bond'), which urged Egypt to fortify its relations with the Arab world and the East. He even took part in political life with energetic backing of his party, the Liberal Constitutionalists, one of whose leaders was his brother Mahmud. Apart from being a member of the party's executive committee, 'Abd al-Raziq was a member of parliament representing the Cairo district of 'Abdin, and played an active role in protecting the constitutional regime from harmful acts by the King or the government (Hatina, 2000:39-40).

'Abd al-Raziq posited the notion of a firm government (*hukuma hazimah*), that would restrain the religious establishment but guarantee Islam a role in a democratic civil regime—a compromise between two extremes: the strict approach, which views religion as a moral code only. This kind of coexistence is possible, he pointed out, given both the existence of democratic values in the religion itself, such as equality before God, social justice, and the sovereignty of the people (the Shura in the case of Islam); and a history that shows that religion did not always serve as an obstacle, but rather as a supportive base, for

establishing democratic regimes such as in Britain and the United States. In formulating this compromise and by calling to absorb the Islamic Arab heritage into Egypt's modern culture. Abd al-Raziq retreated to the mainstream of Egyptian intellectual discourse, which continued to be preoccupied with the issue of tradition versus change as he was reluctant to exclude religion from the public arena (Gershoni, 1999: 293-294). Later on among many thinkers the idea of the Khalifa was dropped in favour of a democratic Islamic government. This attitude was represented by several legal and political thinkers, such as Abd al-Hamid Ibn Badis of Algeria, Hasan al-Banna and Abd al-Gadir Auduh of Egypt.

Abd al-Hamid Ibn Badis (1889-1940), the founder of the Algerian Society of Muslim Ulamas in 1931, was among the first to criticize the Ottoman Khalafah and the call on behalf of some al-Azhar scholars to bestow the title on the Sultan of Egypt. He maintained that the Khalafah had become 'a superficial symbol that had nothing to do with Islam'. Responding to the Sultan's attempts to become Khalafah, Ibn Badis wrote 'enough conceit and trickery! The Islamic nations today-even the enslaved ones-are no longer fooled by such illusions', and concluded that 'the illusion of the Khalafah shall never be achieved and the Muslim someday by God's will-shall arrive to this opinion' (Quoted in Ismael, Tareq & Ismael, Jacqueline. 1985: 40-41).

Ibn Badis, however, never thought that the backwardness of the Muslims was due to any inherent weakness in the Khalafah system but to their abandonment of the cause of progress. The causes of life, civilization and progress are provided to all of mankind alike. He who follows a cause-with God's

will-shall reach his goal whether he is benevolent or sinister, a believer or a non-believer.

Thus the temporary secular consensus imposed by the new political elite in the special circumstances of the national independence movement of the period from 1919 to 1923 began to collapse in the face of a mounting vociferous and violent reassertion of populist religious opposition, which was sedulously encouraged, aided and abetted by the palace with the aim of imposing a more native and traditional popular autocracy in the country. This wave of religio-political revival also manifested itself in the religious overtones of its vehement xenophobic opposition to the British connection, foreign Christian missionaries, and European culture in general. The fact remains that the problem of religion and state, expressed in the 1930s and 1940s as a struggle between traditional populism and secular pluralism, emerged at the later period on the forefront of political affairs in Egypt. Economic difficulties, demographic change, a deteriorating relation with a foreign Christian power, new regional political issues-Palestine, inter-Arab politics as well as the declining fortunes of the old political groups and their leadership, undermined the legitimacy of the whole, at least theoretically secular edifice. It was in opposition to the secular state system that the new radical youth religious movements emerged (Largest of these was the Muslim Brotherhood) and directed much of their energy through out the 1940s for the restoration of the Islamic doctrine concerning the statecraft and the welfare of the Egyptian society as a whole.

## Chapter 2

### Modern Islamic Reform Movement: The Muslim Brotherhood

By the end of World War I, many Egyptians hoped that Great Britain would grant Egypt its independence. A group of prominent secular nationalists led by Sa'ad Zaghlul formed a 'delegation (Wafd) to present the case for Egyptian independence at the Paris Peace Conference. In 1919, the British arrested Zaghlul and two other leading nationalists and exiled them to Malta in the hope that this would put an end to the widespread demonstrations in support of their delegation. But the exile of Zaghlul, who was coming to embody Egyptian nationalism much as Nasser would in the fifties and sixties, triggered a series of demonstration, strikes, and riots, in which virtually all segments of Egyptian society participated, Christian Copts<sup>14</sup> as well as Muslims. This national upheaval finally induced Great Britain to grant Egypt nominal independence in 1922, but real power remained in British hands.

It was in an atmosphere of political and intellectual ferment about the freedom of Egypt from the British control that Hasan al-Banna the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>15</sup> was born (1906-1949). Al-Banna's father was a minor

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14. The Christian Copts constitute about 10 percent of Egypt's population.

15. The literature on the Brotherhood, its origins, its evolution and its growth, is extensive; this study has drawn mainly four major books in English; Mitchell, R.P. 1969. The Society of the Muslim Brothers, London: Oxford University Press; Husaini, Ishak Musa (1956) The Moslem Brethren: The Greatest of Modern Islamic Movements (Eng.,trans) Beirut, Lebanon: Khayat's college book cooperative; and Harris, C.P. (1964), Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt, Hague; Heyworth-Dunne, J. Religious and Political trends in modern Egypt, Washington : published by author.



religious scholar and watch repairer who served as Imam, Muezzin, and Qur'anic teacher in a little town of the Nile Delta (Mitchell, 1969:1). Due to the intellectual/religious orientation of his family, to the most 'traditional' of Islamic legal doctrines (the Hanbali), al-Banna nevertheless became acquainted with several alternative orientations toward Islam, including the Sufi<sup>16</sup> and the more modern views of several contemporaries. After completing his education, he gravitated toward Cairo, where he first came into direct contact with the cosmopolitan influences which were prevalent in all the urban centers of West Asia at the time. Here he encountered the intellectual, political, and social problems and conflicts which the process of 'Westernization' seems to engender : an emphasis upon materialism, the often ostentatious display of wealth, the new standards of prestige and status (which emulated Western criteria), the laxity of adherence to Muslim principles, the moral decay, and the like, to which so many other Muslims leaders have alluded (Aly and Wenner, 1982:337).

In the 1920s, when Banna started his movement, Islamic political thought was divided among three schools: (1) the traditionalists, or the conservative elements of al-Azhar, who theoretically refused any compromise with modernization and secularization, but who, pragmatically, dealt and compromised with the Egyptian crown and the British authorities; (2) the modernizers, or the students of Muhammad Abduh, who tried to modify the tenets of Islam to the

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16. Sufi : almost certainly from the Arabic "suf" meaning "wool", hence a "woolly" or "wool-clad" individual, because of the early adoption by Muslim ascetics and pietists of the white garments of Christian monks. A member of one of the Sufi Orders, the devotees of a mystical "path" or discipline which consists of carefully graded esoteric teachings leading through a series of initiations to the status of adept. The goal of the "path" (tariqa) is to achieve direct communion with God through personal devotion and a mastery of the techniques taught by the Shaykh (Wendell, 1978:169).

requirements of Western 'modernizing' norm, and their logical and, the secularization of Islamic society; and, (3) the conservative reformers (the students of Rashid Rida), who agreed with the second 'school' on the necessity of purifying Islam from innovations (bid'a) which made Muslims depart from the 'true' Islam, on opposition to Taqlid (accepting previous scholarly opinion as binding), and on following the path of Ijtihad (personal interpretation of the basic elements of the faith). However, they disagreed completely on the value of Western political ideas, and argued the necessity of returning to the ideas and practices of the first generation of Islamic rulers for inspiration. For them, the Islamic Caliphate was the ideal government and the great age of early Islam served as a model of what the world should be (Hourani, 1983:7-8).

Hasan al-Banna was attracted to this latter school; his vision was a response to the failure of the liberal institutions (which emerged from the Egyptian Constitution of 1923) to free the country from the British. Probably it was no coincidence that Banna's call started in Isma'illiyya, where all the signs of Western civilization, oppression and colonization were most clearly visible. Banna himself recognized the importance of Isma'illiyya to his organization, because the Suez Canal Zone and the extensive British facilities and influence there had created a sense of alienation in the Egyptians in his own country : for him and others the Zone had become a symbol of the sickness of the country (Agwani, 1974:379). In general terms, Egypt lost confidence in the Western ideas of modernization and liberalism ; it was a time for rising militancy among many elements of the population, as indicated by such organizations as Shubban al-Muslimun (Muslim Youth), Misr al-Fatat (Young Egypt), and, eventually, the

Ikhwan al-Muslimun (The Muslim Brotherhood) – all seeking major changes in Egypt.

It was also the time when even the most liberal of Egyptians-Taha Husayn, Abbas al-Aqqad, Muhammad Husayn Haykal, and Tawfiq al-Hakim – expressed their disappointment in liberal institutions and their inspiration and possible answers.

Although al-Banna was intellectually a combination of Muhammad Abduh's reformism, Rashid Rida's conservatism, and al-Afghani's political activism, he conceived his mission as a more comprehensive vision of Islam. Sa'id, the follower of al-Banna, summarized his view of al-Afghani as 'merely a cry of warning against problems', of Abduh as 'merely a teacher and philosopher', and of Rashid Rida as 'merely a historian and a recorder'. The Muslim Brotherhood, on the contrary, 'means Jihad, struggle and work, it is not merely a philosophical message' (Quoted in Aly and Wenner, 1982:339).

For al-Banna, the Islamic ideal was represented by the first generation of Muslims, when Qur'anic principles were adhered to and Islam was the principal 'nationality'. For him, the distance between current Islamic societies and the true Islamic path was the cause of the decadence in the Muslim umma (community). His basic questions were; do Muslims carry out the Qur'anic commandments? Do they have faith and belief in the divine doctrines contained in the Qur'an? Does any sphere of their life accord with the social laws prescribed in it? Having answered all these questions in the negative, the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood, therefore, was to 'lead mankind towards truth, call humanity to the path of God and illuminate the entire world with the light of Islam' (al-Banna,

1968:10). To him, the revival of Islam, then, is not only a defensive mission to rescue Muslim societies from the West; it is also an offer to bring humanity, 'which has gone astray, to the right course'. 'It is the culture and civilization of Islam which deserve to be adopted and not the materialistic philosophy of Europe' (al-Banna, 1968:3).

The Muslim Brotherhood worked on six principles. The first was scientific: to provide a precise explanation of the Qur'an, and defend it against misinterpretation. The second was pragmatic: to unify Egypt and the Islamic nations around these Qur'anic principles, and to renew their noble and profound influence. The third was economic: the growth and protection of the national wealth, raising the standard of living, the realization of social justice for individuals and classes, social security for all citizens, and a guarantee of equal opportunity for all. The fourth was socio-philanthropic: the struggle against ignorance, disease and poverty. The fifth was patriotic and nationalistic: the liberation of the Nile Valley, all Arab countries, and all parts of the Islamic fatherland from foreigners. The sixth and the final was humanitarian and universal : the promotion of universal peace and a humanitarian civilization on a new basis, both materially and spiritually, through the medium of the principles of Islam (Husayni, 1956:41-42).

To achieve these principles, Banna emphasized the political nature of Islam. He stated, in his message to the Fifth Conference of the Brotherhood:

**We believe the rulers to the teaching of Islam to be comprehensive, to include the people's affairs in this world and hereafter. Those who believe that these teaching deal only with the spiritual side of life are mistaken. Islam is an ideology and a worship, a home and a**

**nationality, a religion and a state, a spirit and work, and a book and sword (Quoted in Aly and Wenner, 1982:340).**

In other words, governing is in the very nature and origins of Islam. For he believed that the role of the Muslim reformer is to act as legislator, educator, judge, and executive: he cannot be only a missionary, but must seek power and authority in order to apply the tenets and laws of Islam. If he does not seek power to that end, he commits an 'Islamic crime' (Quoted in Aly and Wenner, 1982:340).

He further emphasized that the method to achieve these goals is to spread the call of Jihad. As one of the fundamental duties of the true Muslim, Jihad has two aspects: power and argument. Banna stated explicitly 'Allah Almighty commanded the Muslim to do Jihad for His sake.... Only if the people refuse to listen to His call and resort to defiance, oppression and revolt, then, as a last resort, recourse should be had to the word to disseminate the call (al-Banna, 1968:14).

In general, Banna's strategy can be summarized as follows:

(1) avoid the battleground of theological disputes; (2) avoid domination by notables and important men; (3) avoid divisive political organizations such as parties; (4) emphasize gradualness because every movement must pass through several stages before arriving at its goal; (5) seek power in order to realize goals, including if necessary armed force; (6) set up a religious government, because government is one of Islam's cornerstones, and includes education, legislation, adjudication, and implementation and action- all of which are inseparable from one another; (7) belief in Arab and Islamic unity; (8) revival of the Caliphate, because the Caliph is the symbol of Islamic unity; and (9) consider and treat every

country which aggresses against the Islamic homeland as a tyrannical state which must be resisted in every way (Husaini, 1956:42-43). Al-Banna placed great emphasis upon action in his call to the faithful, because he firmly believed that political action was absolutely necessary if the weakness of the Islamic community were to be overcome.

As a means of spreading his movement he used pamphlets, letters, newspaper, speeches, public lectures, personal visits and epistles. His possession of a strong insight aided him in the selection of supporters and members. From these he formed the nucleus of a society which took over an unpretentious house as a meeting place. The house of the Brotherhood in Ismailia became the headquarters of the movement and the respective branches were tied to it by a bond of fraternity without any branch working through another or the work of one attracting the attention of another. The establishment of the headquarters was followed by the creation of some projects, including among these were: (1) the building of neighborhood mosques; (2) creating small educational institutions, which offered courses in religion and literacy; (3) small hospitals and dispensaries for the public; (4) small industrial and commercial enterprises, designed to provide employment as well as income for the organization; and (5) social clubs and organizations – a brilliant stroke, since Banna apparently recognized that people join organizations with public goals for reasons other than the achievement of these public goals, i.e., to satisfy private needs as well. Perhaps of no less importance, the Brotherhood undertook a large scale publishing Program-books, magazines, pamphlets, etc. and finally, after World War II, a mass-circulation newspaper (Aly and Wener, 1982:338).

Later, the Brotherhood began to take up other causes; among these in the 1930s was that of the Palestinians, which resulted in a spread of its influence into Syria, Transjordan, and to a lesser degree, Lebanon. While the Brotherhood continued its educational, social, economic and religious activities, it became increasingly concerned with, and an influential factor in, the political life of Egypt. About five years after the foundation al-Banna was transferred, at his own request, from Ismailia to a teaching post in Cairo, where he resumed his activities. He soon presided over a merger between his group and the Society for Islamic Culture,<sup>17</sup> After which The Cairo branch became the new headquarters of the rapidly expanding the Brothers. However, the movement continued along with its former way- in secrecy and concealment, going to the mosques and preaching, selecting supporters and establishing branches quietly and cautiously.

The expansion of the branches and the necessity of facing new circumstances in Cairo demanded that al- Banna double his efforts, reorganize his activities, renovate his methods and broaden his program. It was at this stage that al- Banna made a plan for the basic organizational set up as the former was not appropriate to meet the growing demands of the operation. In that new set up the executive was appointed by the supreme Guide. This method of appointment in itself was a reflection of the nature of the commanding and decisive leadership of al- Banna. This practice however prevented rivals and enemies to occupy in disguise any key position. This method later on proved a vital factor in the success of the movement. Al- Banna also provided the body of the Supreme board of

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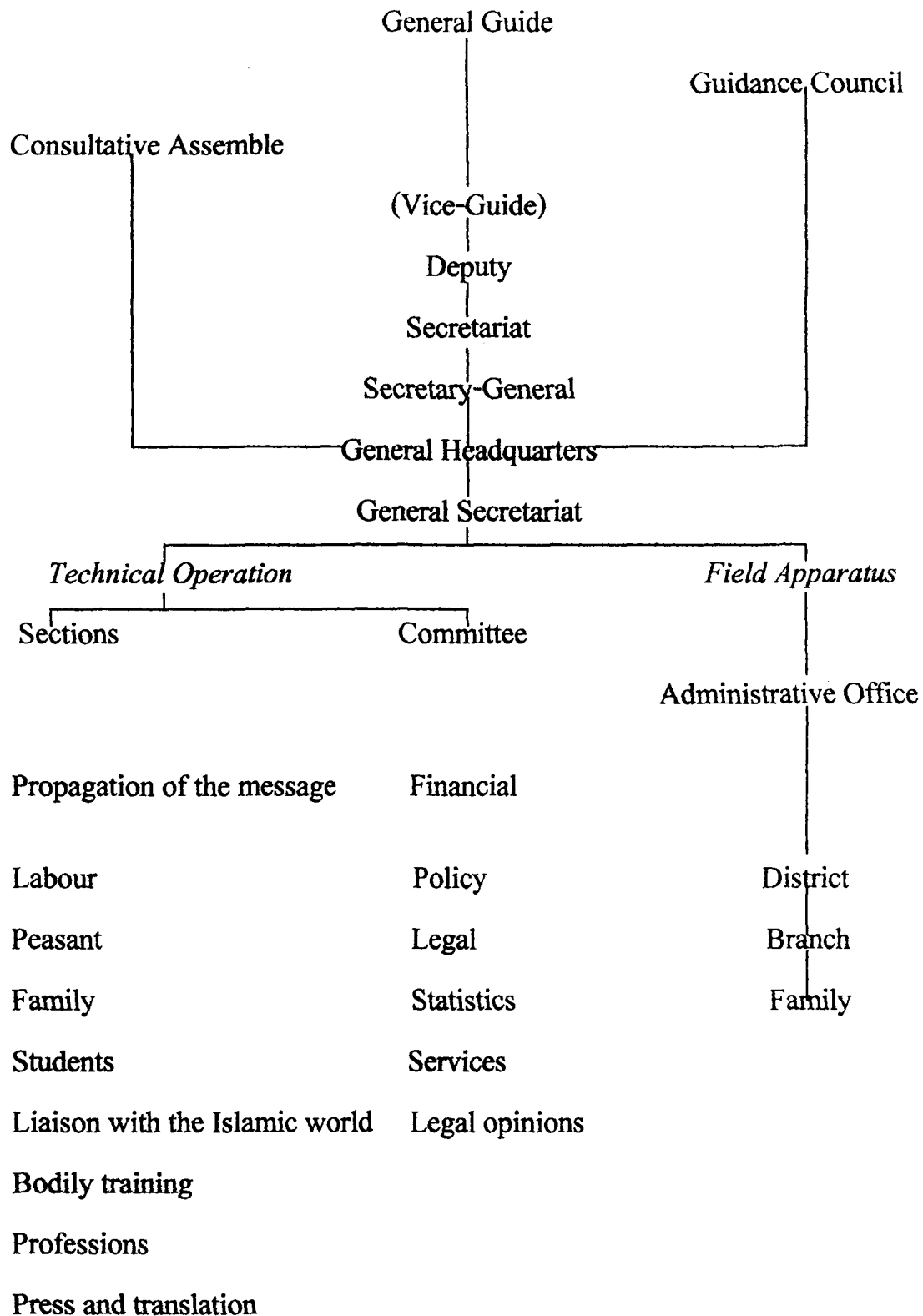
17. This latter organization of Society for Islamic Culture was led by a younger brother of Hassan al-Banna, Abd al-Rahman al-Banna.

guidance which comprised of chief executive and members of various committees.

Al- Banna very skillfully combined the old revolutionary Muslim sects with deeply religious minded to achieve his aims and objectives. It was his sharp mind and experience with which he distinguished between an ordinary member and a member with a special purpose and motive. He also created a section for woman and boy scout groups. Similarly he arranged armed training and formed para-military squads. Further he also laid foundation for clinics, schools and welfare centres besides holding impressive mass, and the publication of party newspapers (Issawi,1954: 267).

The structure of the organization was a hierarchy that means the higher grade of officials would appoint officers of lower grade. The foremost position in the Society was that of the General Guide (al-murshid al-‘amm), who was both head of the Society and chairman of its two major governing bodies, the General Guidance Council (maktab al-irshad al-‘amm) and the Consultative Assemble (al-hay’at al-ta’sisiyya; literally, the Founding Assemble). The Guidance Council was stated to be ‘the highest administrative unit’ of the Society ‘governing policy and administration’. The Consultative Assemble was described as ‘the general consultative council’ (majlis al-shura al-‘amm) of the Society and ‘the general assemble’ (al-jam’iyat al-‘umumiyya) of the Guidance Council. This Structure of the organization can be summarized in the following table:





**Figure 1. General Table of Organization**

Base on Mitchell, Richard P. (1969:164) The Society of the Muslim Brothers, London : Oxford University Press.

The organization's activities consisted in holding evening classes for instruction in religious principles and in reading and writing. It also took up economic activities with a view to train people and to make them understand about their right of living and purpose of existence. At the same time, the people were reminded on what cost of life adopting through the growing Western mentality. This was the only method before al- Banna by which the oppressed people and their almost dead consciousness could be brought back to life by slowly injecting the true spirit of Islam (Zeltzer, 1962: 218).

Al- Banna used to tell stories of heroism and bravery of the past Muslims to this audiences. Similarly he used to unveil some of atrocities done during the British occupation. The damages which were caused to the religion and culture by imposing the Western ways on them were also revealed to general public. This simple way of preaching was enough to awaken the sleeping consciousness of the masses though it took considerable time to boil their blood in their veins, but al- Banna was sure of the ultimate success.

The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood grew, by the outbreak of the second World War, into one of the most important political contestants on the Egyptian scene. Further more, its membership become so diversified as to be virtually representative of every group in Egyptian society. More important, it made effective inroads into the most sought – after of these groups - the civil servants and the student - and the most neglected but potentially powerful, the urban labourers and the peasants.

A series of moves brought the society's headquarters out of the alleys of the popular quarters to main streets of Cairo, from little room to buildings and

land with full-time paid secretarial and clerical staffs, in keeping with its growing membership, strength, and internal and external activity (Heyworth-Dunne, 1950:17). Another measure of the growth of the society was the size and scope of 'general conferences' called periodically to discuss and plan action, or merely (and more usually) to ratify what had already been done or decided. The proceeding of the conferences provide a general picture of the activity of the years 1932-1939. The first general conference, in May 1933, it was called to consider the problem of Christian missionary activities in the country. In the same conference it was decided to send a letter to King Fu'ad on behalf of the Society to inform him about the aims and objects of the society as well as the urgency to bring about control over missionary activities (al-Banna, 1946:162-163).

The second general conference, held later that year, dealt with advertising and instructional propaganda, and authorized 'a small company for the establishment of a press for the Muslim Brothers'. This was followed in due course by the founding of the first official journalistic voices of the Society: first, a weekly magazine called Majallat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn; and later, another called Majallat al-Nadhir. The press also printed what came to be the most important indoctrination texts for members – and until 1948 the chief sources for the study of the ideas of the movement – the 'messages' (ṣaṣa'il) (Mitchell, 1969:13).

The third general conference was held in March, 1935. This conference is notable from the point that the formation of 'rovers' (Jawwalah) was initiated and its development was planned out on the basis of the athletic training started in the very earliest days at Isma'iliya. These rovers were later on turned to be a battalions (Mitchell, 1969:14).

The fourth general conference was held in 1937 to celebrate the coronation of King Farouk. That conference also took up the criteria – question of membership and also discussed the article structures of the society.

With its fifth general conference, Muslim Brotherhood celebrated the first ten years of its existence. During these years, and in the ten years of his life which followed them, al-Banna provided his followers with a coherent and explicit analysis of the ills of contemporary society, and with an Islamic path of spiritual, social, economic and political reforms through which such ills might be confronted and overcome. Indeed, al-Banna's well-developed and well-explicated ideology proved to have a substantial impact on Egypt and the West Asia in general.

In treating the ideas of Hasan al-Banna, one must assume that his thoughts, far from arising in a vacuum, crystallized in the contact of the debates arising in the inter war period over religious, economic, political, social, and intellectual conditions and matters. The thought structure of the Ikhwan, as molded by al-Banna, was based on a world-view of Islam understood as a religion, a civilization, a way of life, an ideology and a state. Some tend to believe however that this world-view, espoused in totality by al-Banna, was essentialist, unchanging, and beyond the rules of history. Al-Banna's Islamist discourse, was born against the tumultuous events of the inter war period and, to a certain extent, al-Banna had to compromise his ideological Islamist stands in order to deal with the dominant system. While it is correct to argue that the Ikhwan, theoretically speaking, can not be regarded as a more-or-less deviant type of offshoot from Islam, it is nonetheless a new phenomenon which emerged in response to certain conditions on the ground (Wendell, 1978:2). Al-Banna's philosophy, therefore,

was that of an intellectual leader and organizer who had a large stake in the world of events in Egyptian society at the time.

al-Banna saw around him an Islamic world beset by poverty, corruption and weakness : Politically, the Islamic countries were assailed by 'imperialist aggression on the part of their enemies, and by factionalism rivalry, division, and disunity on the part of their sons. Economically, they were subject to the propagation of usurious practices throughout all their social classes, and the exploitation of their resources and natural treasures by foreign companies'. Intellectually and sociologically, they suffered from anarchy, licentiousness, and a loss of faith, hope and humanity (Wendell, 1978:61-62).

According to Isma'il, to all these miserable conditions al-Banna offered a solution : the path of Islam. This path was not conceived as simply being a narrow, spiritual one; rather, Islam was seen as representing an all-encompassing system of guidance in social, economic, and political conduct:

**We believe that the principles and teachings of Islam are comprehensive, governing the affairs of men in this world and in the next, and those who think that these teaching deal only with spiritual and ritualistic aspects are mistaken in this assumption, for Islam is : doctrine, worship, homeland, nationality, religion, spirituality and a state, spirituality and action, scripture and sword. The Holy Qur'an speaks of this and considers it the essence of Islam (extract of the speech of al-Banna as quoted in Ismael & Ismael, 1985:62).**

Thus, put simply, the Muslim Brotherhood saw itself as the vanguard of Islam. According to the Brotherhood's view of history, the neglect of Islam had began in the Ummayyad period when, following the rule of the first four rightly-guided Khalifes, Islam was increasingly corrupted and neglected, replaced by the imperatives and decadence of dynastic rule. In turn, this failure to follow the true

path of Islam weakened Islamic civilization : religious schisms and political factionalism became more acute, while a resurgent Europe extended its power. This process of Islamic decline came to a climax in the aftermath of the First World War, with colonial domination of the Middle East, the onslaught of Zionism in Palestine, and the spread of Western secularism and materialism as symbolized by Ataturk's abolition of the Khalifah and the adoption of Western political-legal systems in Turkey, Egypt and elsewhere in Islamic world.

It was in opposition to Western colonialism and imperialism that the Brotherhood directed much of its energy. Al-Banna outlined the two 'fundamental goals' of the Muslim Brethren as follows:

(1) That the Islamic fatherland be freed from all foreign domination, for this is a natural right belonging to every human being which only the unjust oppressor or the conquering exploiter will deny.

(2) That a free Islamic state may arise in this free fatherland, acting according to the precepts of Islam, applying its social regulations, proclaiming its sound principles, and its sage mission to all mankind. For, as long as this state does not emerge, the Muslims in their totality are committing sin, and are responsible before God the Lofty, the Great, for their failure to establish it and their slackness in creating it (Wendell, 1978:31-32).

Thus, the important political aim of the Muslim Brothers was to liberate Egypt and the entire Nile Valley from external imperialism. The organization's goals were the liberation of the Nile Valley and all of the Arab countries and all parts of the Islamic fatherland from all foreigners; to assist Islamic minorities every where for securing their rights; the unqualified support of

Arab unity ; steady progress towards an Islamic league ; the sincere furtherance of world co-operation based on high and worthy ideals which would safeguard freedom and human rights, whereby the strong would lend a helping hand to the weak ; and the institution of a sound state which would put the rules and injunctions of Islam into practice, preserving them at home and transmitting them abroad (Maluleem, 1979:335).

The Muslim Brothers' political thought for liberation from foreign rule was similar to those of various political movements opposing imperialism. The only difference was that the Muslim brothers did it on religious grounds, and not exclusively only on civil grounds. The Muslim Brothers coloured their nationalism with a religious hue. They held that the fight for freedom was one of the religious duties imposed upon every Muslim.

Islam, according to them, considered nationalism (al-qawmiyya) or patriotism (al-wataniyya) in a different secure away from the western sense of the term, which was defined by secular and material interests. Islamic patriotism served a nobler purpose, it led to freedom from narrow partisanship and factionalism and led to the unity of men under the single banner of God (al-Ghazali, 1953:35-37). Thus, Islam considered the result of nationalism to be only the country's material well-being, but the spread of the word of God all over the world.

The Muslim Brothers felt that the true Islamic renaissance was not only the liberation of each Muslim country by the practice of Nationalism and patriotism, but it depended on the unification of all Arab nations. Their attitude towards Arab unity was also tinged by religious favour, though it was rather

secularistic in nature. They declared and supported the measures of facilitating economic unity among the Arabs, such as the establishment of a company invested by purely Arab money to support commercial, industrial, and financial endeavours in the Arab world.

Al-Banna wished that Arab nationalism would possess no trace of racism and the Arab States should be separated from each other by no racial barriers.<sup>18</sup> He attempted to solve this loyalty problem by coining about a dozen Arabic terms to describe loyalty or devotion to the world of Islam, to the Islamic code of conduct, to resolute propagation of Islamic principles over the whole earth, to one's country, to one's people, to one's ancestral heritage, to one's special group in the community, to the aims and ideals of one's group, and so on (Harris, 1964:164).

Easternism (al-Sharqiyya) was a concept recognized by al-Banna on which to find the block of Asian nations and seek for their unity. The Muslim Brothers held that since they were both the Muslims and Asians, they had to strive for the restoration of the honor and dignity of the Asian nations in every possible way.

Easternism, however, lacking common long term interest, was only temporary and transitional. The Muslim brothers then realized that a more

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18. In support of this view of nationalism, al-Banna quoted from the Prophet : 'God has removed from you the arrogance of paganism and the vaunting of your ancestry : mankind springs from Adam, and Adam springs from dust. The Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab except by virtue of his piety' (Al-Banna, 1966:54).



realistic expression of the unity among Asians was to be in the 'Muslim bloc'. He ended however by declaring that it was the duty of all Egyptian Muslim to be loyal to Egypt, loyal to the ideal of pan-Arabism,<sup>19</sup> and loyal to the ideals of Islamic internationalism in the hope, presumably, that no conflict would ever arise between these three ideals' (Quoted in Maluleem, 1979:435).

The idea of Islamic state seemed to be the greatest of Muslim Brotherhood's political ambitions. The religious government was at the head of their political programme. All their books and publications contained writings which indicated clearly their views of this matter. The Muslim Brothers suggested that the principles of Islam should be introduced into the government and the ruling of the country, a government which was not based on Islam was not for Muslims. Islam had made government one of its cornerstones, and is itself rule and execution, legislation and education, law and judicature and each is inseparable from the other (Husayni, 1956:43). Al-Banna said on one occasion that ;

**The Islam is which the Moslim Brethren believe makes government one of its pillars, and relies upon execution as it relies upon guidance.... The prophet made government one of the bonds of Islam.... In our books of jurisprudence, administration is considered as one of the doctrines and tenets and not as casuistry and a consequence of tenets; for Islam is a system of laws and execution, as it is legislation and teaching, law and judicature, one inseparable from the other. If the Islamic reformer satisfies himself with being a jurist-guide, taking decisions, chanting instructions, and**

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19. Pan-Arabism emerged as a widely held separatist ideology before and after the 1914-1918 war. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 meant that Arabs no longer had a protective union against the Western European powers, and this change gave a decisive boost to Pan-Arabism. Pan-Arabism seeks a unified state embracing all Arabic speaking people. The Pan-Arabic movement was divided between proponents of inter-governmental economic and political co-operation between sovereign Arab states, and advocates of the merger of existing Arab states into a single state.

**quoting the principles and consequences of actions, and leaves to the executives the making of national laws, which are not permitted by God, and is led to the breaking of His commandments by the force of the imposition (of these laws) then the natural consequence is that the reformer's voice will be a cry in the wilderness (Quoted in Husayni, 1956:63).**

He did not agree with the existing condition of separation between Religion and state (of Din from the dawla). He considered that Islam did not truly means only religion, in fact it included politics, economics, society, etc. Al-Banna thus argued that:

**Politics is a part of religion, that encompasses the ruler and the rule. Thus there is not contained in its teachings a rendering to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's rather.... Caesar and what belongs to Caesar is for God Almighty alone.**

In another occasion he said;

**There is no authority in Islam except the authority of the state which protects the teachings of Islam and guides the nations to the fruits of both religion and the world.... Islam does not recognize the conflict which occurred in Europe between the spiritual and temporal (powers)...between the church and the state... (Quoted in Mitchell, 1969:244).**

His belief came to the conclusion that Islam could command a 'unity of life' and led to a stronger conclusion that, Rule is in the nature of Islam. If Qur'an gave a law, it also required a body to enforce the law, and a state was what is required. The state was necessary because it could facilitate many duties incumbent on Muslims which they could not do individually. Besides this duty, the state has a greater duty, that was to protect Islam. This purpose had been mentioned by one of the famous ideologue of the Brothers, al-Ghazali:

**Faith should not be left without a political stronghold to give it protection and to champion the cause of believers everywhere. Seldom, if ever, has Islam needed the state more than today, not merely because Islam itself is threatened with extinction in a world where only the strong can survive (Al-Ghazali/el-Faruqi, 1953:14-15-26).**

In creating the Islamic state, three broad principles should inform the political structure and institutions.

1. The Qur'an should be regarded as the basic constitutional document ;
2. There must be consultation (Shura);
3. The ruler is bound by the teachings of Islam and the will of the people from whom he receives his authority to rule and to whom he is responsible.

As far as the Shari'a was concerned, al- Banna believed that its two sources were the Qur'an and Sunna, but the former required a fresh and clearer interpretation, while the latter needed a careful re-examination in order to distinguish the true Sunna from false report. In addition, the relationship between the two sources was, in his eyes, different to the orthodox view. As one member of the Brotherhood put it, 'the Sunna is a kind of supplement to the legal injunction of the Qur'an, but mostly it is a spiritual inspiration and guide to the whole islamic system' (Mitchell, 1969: 238).

Because of Islam's status on an all-embracing system of social knowledge, al-Banna saw within it guidance on matters of strategy as well as on matters of diagnosis and cure. His descriptions of the tasks confronting the Brotherhood were thus always amply supported by Qur'anic citations and the saying of the prophet. Within the organization, strong emphasis was placed on the

overriding importance of deep faith, precise organization, uninterrupted work, obedience and determined leadership. Because of the multi-faceted nature of Islam, al-Banna constantly stressed that the Ikhwan was not a narrow political or religious-grouping. Instead, he asserted that it was all of these and more:

1. It's a Salafi movement<sup>20</sup>: it pursues the return of Islam to the purity of its source in the Qur'an and the Tradition of the Prophet.

2. It's a Sunni order: it is modeled on the Sunna in everything, particularly in matters of belief and worship....

3. It's a Sufi reality: it operates on the principle that virtue is in the purity of the soul, innocence of the heart, hard work....

4. It's a political organization: it demands reform in internal politics, changes in the relationship between Islamic nation and the outside world, and the education of the people for integrity, self-respect and national consciousness.

5. It's an athletic club: it promotes good health...since the duties of Islam cannot be fulfilled without good health....

6. It's a scientific and cultural society: because Islam makes the search for knowledge an imperative of every Muslim and the Brotherhood in reality is a school for education, an institute (dedicated) to caring for body, mind spirit.

7. It's an economic enterprise : because Islam deals with

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20. The salafiyya movement was launched by Rashid Rida (1865-1935, disciple of the great Egyptian Muslim reformer Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905). Its goal was the revival of Islam not so much by harmonizing it with modern times as advocated by the reformers, but by a return to the pristine Islam the pious forbears (salaf). Salafism was to some extent an amalgamation of reformist with fundamentalist Wahabi trends.

the acquisition and management of wealth....

8. It's a social idea : its deals with the problem of Islamic society and attempts to find solutions...(Quoted in Ismael & Ismael, 1985:64).

Al-Banna's letter to King Fu'ad in 1933 concerning missionary activity was the forerunner of many such communications to Egyptian heads of government seeking reform in the name, and within the spirit and letter of Islam. The most notable of these, letter addressed in 1936 to King Faruq, his prime minister Mustafa al-Nahhas Pasha, and the heads of all Arab governments, was a basic statement of the early propositions held by Banna; it appeared as the letter (risala) called Nahwa al-Nur (Towards the Light). The address was not made for the benefit of any particular section or community or nation but it was a religious appeal to every Muslim, to follow the principles of Islam, its rules, its laws and its civilization, in the true sense. It also objected to warn every body in general that the love for Westernization not only would spoil the heritage of their forefathers, but at the same time it would be disastrous for the generation and also to the coming generations. Al-Banna argued that the Islamic world had reached a crossroads at which it must choose between two competing paths of development: the Western path, and the path of Islam. Western civilization, he noted, had achieved much. But those achievements were now crumbling and tyranny, economic crises, and exploitation due to the inherently blind and misguided nature of the Western path. Thus revealed, the way of Western civilization had little to commend it (Ismael & Ismael, 1985:65).

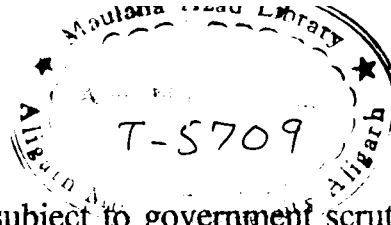
The way of Islam, on the other hand, promised to solve all the problems of the West. It, more than any other ideology, belief in system of social

organization, provided the basis for national resurgence. According to him, 'there is no regime in this world which will supply the renascent nation with what it requires in the way of institutions, principles, objectives, and sensibilities to the same extent as does Islam to every one of its renascent nations.... No nation adheres to (Islam) without succeeding in its aspirations' (Al- Banna , 1936:107-108).

Islam provides hope for the weak. Islam brings national greatness through divine sanctification. It concerns itself with the strengthening of just armed forces, with the quality of public health, with the provision of a superior morality, with the fostering of a sound economy and with the creation of appropriate public institutions. Contrary to what some may think, adherence to the Islamic path does not imply intolerance of non-Muslim religious minorities. Nor need an Islamic resurgence necessarily lead to increased friction with the West.

Of particular interest in Nahwa al-Nur are al-Banna's proposals for practical reforms which would characterize adherence to the Islamic path. No less than fifty such reforms are elucidate, with al-Banna offering the assistance of the Muslim Brotherhood to any government or organization which wishes to implement them.

Under the heading political, judicial, and administrative reforms, al-Banna called for changes in the judicial system so as to bring it into accordance with the Shari'a; the infusion of Islamic principles and morality into the bureaucracy and government institutions; and the evaluation of all government action by reference to Islamic teachings. The operation of the civil service should facilitate the performance of religious duty, and the private and public behaviour



of all government employees should be subject to government scrutiny. Bribery and favouritism must be ended. Party rivalry must also ended, with all political forces within the nation channeled into a single common front. The armed forces should be strengthened. The government should pursue a pan-Islamic foreign policy by strengthening its ties with other Islamic countries, and by giving 'serious consideration to the matter of the departed Khalafah (Al-Banna,1936:126).

The second set of reforms proposed by al-Banna in Nahwa al-Nur was categorized as 'social and educational'. Many of these concerned public morality: al-Banna called for an end to prostitution, gambling, dancing, ostentatious dress, and Western customs; support for traditional family life and the treatment of women in accordance with Islamic principles; and the enforcement of an Islamic moral code through the censorship of speeches, books, plays, radio broadcasts and the cinema. Public health care should be expanded, and attention be given to hygiene and a clean water supply within the village. Education should be reformed by increasing its religious content, and by affiliating village primary schools with the mosques. Increased emphasis should be placed on the teaching of Arabic, and Islamic history. Male and Female students should be segregated, with each learning a distinct and appropriate curriculum. A literacy programme should be oriented towards training the general level of education, bringing different cultures together, and 'inculcating a virtuous, patriotic spirit and an unwavering moral code' (Al-Banna,1936:127-129).

Third, al-Banna proposed a number of economic reforms. First, among these was the reorganization of the Zakat (alms tax), and the use of funds so raised for benevolent projects and the strengthening of the armed forces. Usury

should be prohibited, and the masses protected from exploitation by monopolies. Productivity, income and employment should be increased; natural resources exploited; and foreign projects nationalized. Civil service salaries should be adjusted so as to increase the pay of junior civil servants and decrease that of senior civil servants, with the total number of government posts to be reduced.

The specific reform proposals put forward by Hasan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood in Nahwa al-Nur obviously do not represent the totality of the Brotherhood's social, political and economic agenda. Elsewhere, for example, one finds al-Banna calling for land reform, labour organization, social security and the redistribution of wealth (Mitchell, 1969:272-293). Nevertheless, Nahwa al-Nur does illustrate well the emphasis that the Muslim Brotherhood placed on the improvement of society through a fundamental 'Islamification' of people's beliefs and moral codes, as well as of formal government institutions.

Further to emphasize this political places forcefully articulated the various issues on which sensitive Egyptian public was greatly agitated these were: the wide disparity in income distribution, the Palestinian question, the Presence of British soldiers on Egyptian soil and the consequent mushrooming of cultural decline.

## **The Brotherhood and Political Action**

The late 1930s saw the full-fledged entrance of the Muslim Brotherhood onto the political stage, in Egypt and in other Islamic countries. It



was, more than any other issue, circumstances in Palestine which facilitated this entrance and geographic expansion. When the Palestinian Arab revolted against British colonial rule and Zionist<sup>21</sup> immigration broke out in 1936, the Brotherhood seized upon the occasion to carry out active anti-British propaganda throughout Egypt. During the three years of the revolt (1936-1939), the organization came into contact with the Mufti of Jerusalem, and raised funds for the Palestinian cause.<sup>22</sup> They also came into close contact with a number of Egyptian political leaders, notably (Prime Minister) 'Ali Maher and 'Abd al-Rahman Azzam, both of whom were trying to formulate an Egyptian pan-Arab policy (Heyworth-Dunne, 1950:23-28).

The Palestine issue further stimulated the growth of the Brotherhood : the total number of Brotherhood branches grew from roughly 15 in 1932 to 300 in 1938, to 500 in 1940 (Mitchell, 1969:328). These included, after 1937, a branch in Syria, based in Aleppo and covering Syria and Lebanon; and agents in a number of other Arab countries (Heyworth-Dunne, 1950:17 ; Mitchell, 1969:75-76). The Brotherhood membership was drawn from most social classes, and was

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21. Zionism is a colonial movement based on racist, supremacist and distant religious notions perceived and launched as a political project within the imperialist framework of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Europe. Both the antagonistic Western attitude towards the Arabs and the Zionist colonial ideology are now clearly anachronistic and actually threaten the interest and well-being of the West, the Jews and humanity. That these Western attitudes and Zionist ideas are presently at variance with the spirit of our times, is borne out by the liquidation of colonialism and racist entities in Africa and elsewhere and by the United Nations Resolution 3379 of 10 November 1975 which determined that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination (Kayyali, 1979:5).

22. The Muslim Brothers had first become directly involved in Palestinian affairs when Banna's Brother 'Abd al-Rahman visited Palestine in 1935 and met Haj Amin al-Husayni, mufti of Jerusalem and chairman of the Supreme Muslim Council of that time. The visit reflected the predictable concern of the Muslim Brothers – as Egyptians, as Arabs, and as Muslims – for the cause of Palestine. 'Abd al-Rahman had been the chief of most articulate spokesman of that concern from the earliest days of the movement in Cairo (Mitchell, 1969:55).

predominantly rural or urban working class in composition. Despite this, however, the leadership and the most active cadres of the organization were dominated by Egyptians from urban middle-class backgrounds.

The Muslim Brotherhood's very success soon sparked off challenges to the government, and ushered in a period of tribulation for the movement. This was not unforeseen, for even as the Brotherhood had embarked on the path of active politics, al-Banna had warned his followers of the challenges ahead :

**I would like to avow to you frankly that your mission is still unknown to many people, and that on the day they find out about it and grasp its import and its aims, you will encounter violent antagonism and sharp hostility. You will find many hardships ahead of you, and many obstacles will rise up before you...you will find among the clerical classes and the religious establishment those who will regard your understanding of Islam as outlandish, and censure your campaign on that account. Chiefs, leaders and men of rank and authority will hate you, all governments will rise as one against you, and every government will try to set limits to your activities and to put impediments in your way.... Without a doubt, you will then experience trials and tribulations, you will be imprisoned, arrested, transported, and persecuted, and your goods will be confiscated, your employments suspended, and your homes searched (Quoted in Wendell, 1980:34-35).**

With the approach and outbreak of the Second World War, the Brotherhood continued its anti-British, pan-Islamic propaganda, officially calling for Egyptian non-belligerency in the conflict and the limitation of assistance to Britain to the minimum stipulated in the 1936 Anglo Egyptian Treaty (i.e. a British garrison in the Canal Zone, a naval base at Alexandria, and wartime use of Egyptian communication facilities). Furthermore, al-Banna was secretly in contact with anti-British elements within the Egyptian armed forces, notably (former) Egyptian Commander-in-Chief 'Aziz al-Misri, and a junior army officer

named Anwar al-Sadat. This stance led to increasing British pressure on successive Egyptian governments to deal with the Brotherhood and other anti-British movements. Eventually, in October 1941, the government of Prime Minister Sirri Pasha moved against the Muslim Brotherhood, arresting al-Banna and a few other prominent members of the organization, and suppressing the weekly magazines al-Ta'aruf and al-Shua' and the monthly al-Manar. Meetings of, and press references to, the Brotherhood were also banned (Mitchell, 1969:22-26).

Al-Banna and his colleagues were released in less than a month due to palace intervention on the Brotherhood's behalf. As a result of his imprisonment by the British authorities, Banna founded a more scout "sub-group" within the organization as the 'Secret Apparatus'. However, it was not until February 1942 that the Brotherhood were allowed to resume some of their activities.

As the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as a socio-religious organization as well as a political guide of the masses, it decided in its sixth general conference held in January 1941, that the society would run candidates in national elections. The announcement of the elections by the new government of the Wafd was considered appropriate for the first test of the Muslim Brother's electoral strength. Banna declared himself a candidate for the district of Isma'iliyya, the birthplace of his movement, but no sooner had he done so, the then Prime minister Nahhas summoned him and called upon him to withdraw.<sup>23</sup>

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23. Nahhas Pasha was convinced that leader of the Muslim Brotherhood would win this election in Ismailia against the Wafdist contestant. He, therefore, sent for the Brotherhood leader and forced him to withdraw his candidature.

Without much debate, he consented, but 'at a price' which included : (1) freedom for the movement to resume full-scale operations; and (2) a promise of government action against the sale of alcoholic drink and against prostitution. Nahhas agreed, and very shortly ordered restrictions on the sale of liquor at certain times of every day, during Ramadan, and on religious holidays. Similarly, he took steps to make prostitution illegal and immediately closed down some of the brothels. He also permitted the resumption of some of the activities of the Brotherhood, including the issue of some of its publications and the holding of meetings (Heyworth-Dunne, 1950:40).

However, relations between the Brotherhood and the Wafd remained unstable. At the end of 1942, Nahhas again ordered for the closure of all branches of Brotherhood, excepting only the headquarters. In early 1943 the situation however was reversed, with the visit to the headquarters of a group of Wafdist dignitaries – mostly ministers – who, after a speech by Banna, declared their loyalty to the idea represented by the Brothers. During the remainder of the life of the ministry relations alternated between the friendly and the hostile: surveillance and censorship, followed by periods of relative freedom (Mitchell, 1969:27).

The inconsistency of the Wafd reflected in part the recognition of the growing power of the Muslim Brothers, and what, from that time on, would be an ambivalent or many-sided approach to it. For the 'liberal' wing of the Wafd, the Muslim Brothers were always anathema. For the 'right' wing, headed from that time by Fu'ad Siraj al-Din, the organization was as a useful instrument against the dangerous social pressures being generated in Egypt -communism especially had flourished during the war (Kaplinsky, 1954:380).

The Wafdist government remained in power almost to the end of the War, completely fulfilling the expectations of the British as to its ability and will to maintain the order and security necessary to the successful pursuance of the war. However its own internal corruption (which led to a split in its ranks) and, as the war danger receded from the Nile Valley, the emergence of old and new political tensions (especially between the palace and the Wafd) set the stage in October 1944 for a royal dismissal of the Nahhas cabinet.

With the dismissal of the Wafd in October 1944, the palace selected Ahmar Mahir Pasha, the leader of the Sa'dist Party,<sup>24</sup> to form a new government. This was the first of a succession of what the Brothers and the Wafd called 'minority governments'. From this time until the elections of January 1950 Egypt was ruled by independents and Sa'dists, reflecting the active return of the palace to the field of domestic politics and its success at excluding the Wafd from power. The situation also promised that post-war Egypt, facing critical internal and external problems and ruled by men without a semblance of popular support, was destined to pass through a lively period in its history.

Mahir immediately made preparations for a new general election which the Brothers again prepared to contest. Banna again opted for Isma'illiyya, and five of his chief colleagues chose other areas in Egypt intending to campaign on the basis of an 'Islamic programme'. In January 1945 the elections – believed to have been among the more obviously dishonest held in Egypt – took place, and

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24. Egyptian party founded in 1937 by a faction of younger leaders seceding from the Wafd. They were led by Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi and Dr. Ahmad Mahir and represented themselves as the true heirs of the Wafd leader, Sa'ad Zaghlul, from whom they took their party's name. The Sadist Party became one of the anti-Wafd groups relied upon by the King and his court. They formed coalition governments with the Liberal Constitutional Party. The two parties won the 1938 and 1945 election.

Banna and all the other Brothers were defeated in constituencies where they had been certain of victory (Kirk, 1954:263). Besides the obvious interest of the government in winning seats for its partisans, Mahir had already shown his attitude to the Brothers by seeking, but not getting, a fatwa from the rector of the Azhar, Shaykh Maraghi, declaring that there were too many Islamic societies in Egypt- a move felt to be aimed at the Muslim Brothers.

When Mahir made known his intention to declare war on the Axis, the Muslim Brothers, together with the great majority of nationalists, including the Wafd, protested; but, determined to secure a place for Egypt in the peace-making, Mahir persisted. On 24 February 1945, as he read the declaration of war in the chamber of deputies, he was assassinated. The murder of Ahmad Mahir, however was not the act of Muslim Brotherhood, but the ruling party somehow or other dragged their name over the issue. Banna, Sukkari, and 'Abidin were arrested but almost immediately released, following the investigation and the assassin's confession that he was a member of the National Party ( Kirk, 1954:266).

Following the assassination of Mahir, Muhammad Fahmi al-Nuqrashi Pasha (1888-1948), a close friend of Mahir succeeded as Prime Minister and as head of the Sa'dist Party. Al-Banna visited the new Prime Minister to convey his condolences and to explain the mission of the society. However Nuqrashi Pasha, as was suspicious of the Brotherhood's mission, ordered for a strict surveillance of the activities of the members and the organization, a policy which was applied with varying degrees of severity while he remained in office from 25 February 1945 to 14 February 1946.

Post-war Egypt however was a country racked by political turmoil, and full of inner contradiction as regards to political order and legitimacy. It was in this situation that the Muslim Brotherhood found itself in competition with the Wafd for the leadership of the nationalist movement in Egypt, and in this, they also found some encouragement from King Faruq, and from Prime Minister Isma'il Sidqi Pasha, leader of People Party. The Sidqi government (February-December 1946) permitted the Ikhwan to publish its newspaper, to purchase newsprint at the official rate, and extended training and uniform privileges to the Ikhwan scout corps (Firq al-Rihalal). Such encouragement did not, however, lead to any diminution of Ikhwan criticism of government policy as al-Banna and his movement were still constantly critical of Egyptian-British dealings regarding British withdrawal from Cairo, Alexandria and the Canal Zone, and future Anglo-Egyptian defence arrangement: 'The government of Sidqi Pasha, in its insistence on negotiation, does not represent the will of the nation; any treaty or alliance concluded by it with Britain, before the evacuation of her forces, is void and does not bind the nation' (Quoted in Mitchell, 1969:49).

At the same time, the Wafd launched a nation wide programme to extend its area of activities. They combined the students of the Nile valley bitterly criticized the terms of the treaty and sent letters of protest to members of parliament and authorities. On account of this daily riots started in various regions and this lead to the major riot on 25<sup>th</sup> November in which stores, bookshops and trams were burnt. Finally rioting spread out to seven major places in the country. The security and British forces in all the major centres were also being attacked.

At the same time the Brotherhood also started a campaign for social boycott of the Britishers.

Under these circumstances the government dealt with the situation in a very severe way and ordered to close down these newspaper, which indulged in anti-government propaganda. Many activists were arrested from among the communists, Socialists, Wafdists, and Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Banna's deputy Ahmad al-Sukkari, was arrested on account of his speeches in support of the riot. These arrests were followed by continuous rioting, more prominent among which were the attacks on British establishments and personnels and on the Egyptian police. By 8<sup>th</sup> December, the rioting had served its purpose. Having failed in his mission to sell the treaty to Egypt, Sidqi Pasha resigned from government. As soon as he resigned King Farouk once again called Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi Pasha (Sa'dist Party) to form a cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1946.

Formal resistance to the idea of the treaty however was continued through the so-called 'Liaison Committee' composed of the groups in opposition to it; the Muslim Brothers refused to join, arguing that the committee lacked 'sincerity'. The Wafd, of course, revived the charge that Banna was obstructing the national movement by allying himself with the government, a charge given surface substance by what was to follow. Meanwhile, on 25 January 1947, when Nuqrashi broke off negotiations with the Britisher and declared his intention of bringing Egypt's case before the Security Council of the United Nations. The line adopted by Nuqrashi was the same as was recommended sometime back by Muslim Brotherhood. They, therefore, decided to send their representative along



with Nuqrashi Pasha to the United Nation. Their representative, Mustafa Mu 'min (leader of Cairo University), left Cairo on 26 July (Mitchell, 1969: 50-51).

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August, while a resolution recommending a resumption of negotiations was being discussed, Mustafa Mu'min delivered an impassioned speech from the spectators' gallery and produced a document, signed with students blood, which repudiated negotiations and demanded the complete evacuation of Britisher and immediate reunification of the Nile Valley. On this outburst of protest, he was expelled from the Security Council. Mu'min returned to Egypt before the end of the Security Council session and with the aid of a New York maritime Union, which included some former Egyptians, produced a 'demonstration' outside the United Nations building (Mitchell, 1969:51).

Finally Security Council adjourned its session on 10<sup>th</sup> September with the Egyptian question unsolved. The movements of Egypt had produced a sense of deep distrust in the Western countries. This distrust and frustration became worse, when on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1947 the Security Council decreed the partition of Palestine. This started a new phase in the history of Egyptian politics.

In the wake of these events Hasan al-Banna seemed to have felt, more urgently than ever, that true Muslims could wait to no longer to destroy the forces of secularism, to purify Egypt and establish Islamic government in the country. Egyptian politicians who opposed principles and programmes of Muslim Brotherhood, as well as Egyptians or foreigners who showed any – pro-British learnings became the targets of Brotherhood's terrorist attacks. These developments further brought deterioration into the political life of the country and led to a state of lawlessness.

The rapid growth of militant anti-British sentiment was complemented by a growing crisis in Palestine. As during the 1936-1939 Palestine revolt, the Muslim Brotherhood was vociferous in its support for the Palestinian Arab cause. Arms were acquired; paramilitary training missions dispatched to Palestine; and Brethren were trained and mobilized for future military service in the country, with the first Ikhwan 'battalion' ready for action by October 1947. Several weeks before the 'official' outbreak of the Palestine war and the formal intervention of Egyptian and other Arab armies on 15 May 1948, Muslim Brotherhood irregulars began infiltrating into Palestine and fighting alongside with Palestinian forces.

Muslim Brothers 'anti-British activities and their clear commitment to the Palestinian cause, as well as their social ideology, were well received by the Egyptian masses. Furthermore, they managed to avoid the stigmas attached to their major political competitors. Unlike the Wafd, the Brotherhood were not tainted by wartime co-operation with the British, corruption, and identification with vested interests. In contrast to the communists and their alien doctrines of proletarian struggle, the Ikhwan's Islam was understandable and attractive to the traditional population. As a result of these and other factors, the Brotherhood's support reached new heights during this period, with some estimates putting the figure at 300,000-600,000 members (and many sympathizers), organized into some two thousand branches (Heyworth- Dunne, 1950:68). Formal or informal Muslim Brotherhood branches existed outside Egypt in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq, Sudan, Eritrea, Morocco, Tunisia and other Islamic countries inside and outside the West Asia.

The failure of Arab military intervention to crush the nascent state of Israel and prevent the partition of Palestine, further intensified civil unrest in Egypt in the second half of 1948. The Muslim Brotherhood's political success – coupled with their militancy and increasing use of violent measures – ultimately compelled the Egyptian government to take harsh action against the brotherhood. Thus, on 8 December 1948, citing the Muslim Brotherhood's involvement in acts of violence and conspiracy, the al-Nuqrashi government issued a military order calling for disbanding of the Muslim Brethren and their branches wherever they may be, the closing of their centres, and the seizure of their papers, documents, magazine, publications, monies and properties, and all other assets of the Association (Husayni, 1956:21). Thereafter, and despite al-Banna's best efforts, relations between the Ikhwan and the government deteriorated still further. On 28 December 1948, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood's 'secret apparatus' shot and killed Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi as he entered the Ministry of the Interior. As a result, al-Nuqrashi's successor, Prime Minister Ibrahim 'Abd al-Hadi Pasha (Saadist Party), instituted a ruthless campaign of arrests and property seizure against the outlawed organization.

Al-Banna deeply regretted the assassination and the government reaction to it. He had second thoughts as to the wisdom of the Brotherhood's entrance into formal politics, and wrote that future Muslim Brotherhood activities might best be confined to education and advocacy within the framework of existing political parties:

**The thought which I have conceived is that our organization should take upon itself the raising of the standards of the country, religiously, socially and economically neglecting the political aspects – and to permit outstanding members of the association to present**

**themselves for the elections under the auspices of whatever parties they see fit to join ; provided that they do not join any one party and provided they undertake the spreading of the mission of the association within these parties.... I believe the time is not far distant when these parties will have faith in what we advocate (Quoted in Husayni, 1956:21).**

It was, however, too late. On 12 February 1949 Hasan al-Banna – founder, Director-General, and guiding force of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun – was assassinated outside the headquarters of the Young Men's Muslim Association by members of the Egyptian secret police.<sup>25</sup>

Al-Banna's death was a severe blow to the Muslim Brotherhood, as were the seven months of continued suppression under al-Hadi government which followed it. Eventually, however, the Society's oppression was lessened with the accession to power of a Wafdist government under Nahas (The Wafd gained a considerable support from the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950 election).<sup>26</sup> Gradually under the Wafd government, the arrested members of the Brothers were released, regained its property, started publication of its newspapers, and became openly active in politics once more. Hasan Isma'il al-Hudaybi, a former judge, was elected the new Director General of the movement. His open condemnation of past Ikhwan violence, his dislike of the 'secret apparatus', and his apparent

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25. It was believed that Ibrahim 'Abd al-Hadi, who succeeded Nuqrashi as Prime Minister, had with the connivance of the King, instigated the assassination of al-Banna because he was afraid of arresting him. 'Abd al-Hadi was eventually tried for the crime, in 1953, when the new Revolution Government came to power (Harris, 1964:188).

26. The Wafd surprised everyone in January 1950 by winning the election with a sweeping majority. It is not inconceivable that the outlawed Brethren, leftist groups, and the Communist Party threw their support to the Wafd primarily to avenge Sa'adists who had persecuted them so severely from 1946 to 1949. But since the government under which elections were held was independent or politically neutral, it strengthened the Wafd's chances of success. The latter's electoral organization in the provinces as well as its vast financial resources worked successfully. It captured 228 of the 319 seats in the Parliament (Vatikiotis, 1961:36-37).

accommodation with the palace, stimulated initial opposition to his leadership, which presaged the internecine feuding that would plague the society throughout the 1950s (Ismael & Ismael, 1985:73-74).

In the early 1950s, However, the future of the Muslim Brothers was doubtful because there was no conviction as to whether the organization could revive or in what shape it would be : It is notable that, during this period of its crisis, an aiding hand was stretched out to help them ; it was the hand of a political party called the Socialist Party,<sup>27</sup> which had programmes similar to those of Muslim Brotherhood's on both national and reformatory matters. The Party acted as if it was the successor of the Muslim Brothers itself. It openly defended the Muslim Brothers and gave its cooperation to some of the former leaders of the Muslim Brothers. It had also called for the reestablishment of the organization by giving the reason that, if the government continued to persecute the Brothers, they would only be forced into being further extremists. It also supported the religious ideology of the Muslim Brothers stating that 'if an association of Egyptians wish to form a purely Islamic party calling for the total adjustment of laws to the Qur'an, that is their right' (Quoted in Jankowski, 1975:97).

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27. The Socialist Party was founded in the year 1933 by Ahmad Husayn, the socialist party was named "Misr al-Fatat" or "Young Egypt" also known as "Green Shirt". In 1940 it somewhat broadened its religious activities and propaganda and changed its name, becoming the Nationalist Islamic Party (Hizb al-Watan al-Islami). Like the Muslim Brotherhood, it was a reaction to the growing disillusionment with the Wafd. But its extremism took the form of chauvinistic slogans and a Nazi patterned organizations. With the defeat of the European Fascists in the Second World War, the party suffered a heavy setback. In 1949, in an attempt to ride the revolutionary tide, the party changed its name into the "Socialist Party" through its organs al-Ishtirakiyya (Socialism) and Misr-el Fatat it was able to spread its influence with a dramatic spread due to the scathing attacks they made on the regime and the King himself. They organized arson and bloodshed of Cairo's "Black Saturday" January 26, 1952), is most often laid at the door of Ahmad Husayn and his organization. Young Egypt eventually changed its name a second time, before the Revolution of 1952, it became the "Socialist Party" (Wahby, 1966:36-37).

Despite involvement in guerrilla warfare against the British in the Canal Zone, the Brotherhood maintained a relatively low political profile until 1952 Egyptian revolution. Prior to the revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood had contacted with the Free Officers' movement. In fact, several prominent members of the Free Officers' movement maintain that the Muslim Brotherhood leadership had prior knowledge of the date of the revolution and played a role in it by providing guards for important public buildings and mosques.

The relationship, though formal, between the Muslim Brotherhood and the "Free Officer" can be traced back to the year 1940. At that time, nationalists seriously considered taking advantage of the situation to drive out the British. The notion appealed to both the army officers and Hasan al-Banna, but neither party had sufficient trust in the other to divulge its aspirations. It was Anwar al-Sadat, one of the officers, who however believed to have acted a prominent role as the middleman between the army and Hasan al-Banna during the 40's, and encouraged Banna to cooperate in the secret revolution.

Several meetings took place between Sadat and al-Banna that led to mutual respect and confidence. And in fact, all officers who contacted Banna or knew him could not conceal their admiration for the strength of his personality and the sincerity of his nationalism. During this time the Brethren were collecting arms for their militant activities. The army officers were also in preparation to face the situation. The Brethren, therefore, were given some assistance from the army in hoarding arms. The army, in turn, sought the help of the Brethren as they planned to destroy the British armies which were retreating from Alamein. However, Banna declined to give such assistance feeling uncertain of his material

power and simply expressed his sympathy for the army's move (Husayni, 1956:126).

However in 1945, when World War II ended, Nasser came in contact with the Muslim Brethren through Muhammad Libib, an officer, and Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Ra'uf,<sup>28</sup> a young liaison man. 'Abd al-Ra'uf seemed to be one of the first and most active members of the group which came to be called the "Free Officers"; in its highest councils, he remained the chief propagandist and protagonist of the Muslim Brothers (Mitchell, 1969:96-97).

Muhammad Labib was an officer who retired from the army in 1936 and come to work with Banna in 1941 as his unofficial adviser on scouting activities until 1947. Thereafter, he was appointed as a deputy for military affairs in the organization. He was sent to Palestine in order to recruit and train volunteers and was appointed both the technical head of the volunteer divisions and as Banna's personal representative on matters relating to the war. He was involved in the most important relations with the Free Officers in 1944.

The meeting between Labib and Nasser took place in the summer of 1944 at Cairo zoo. Labib spoke of the need for the army to take an active part in the Liberation of the country. He discussed the problems of Egypt and stressed the need of faith and the importance of the Muslim Brothers. He suggested that the practical way was to 'begin to organize groups in the army, which have faith in what we believe, so that when the time comes, we will be organized in one rank, making it impossible for our enemies to crash us'. It was as a result of this

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28. Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Ra'uf, the friend of Sadat who was arrested with Misri in his abortive attempt to escape from Egypt in 1941 and who replaced Sadat as liaison man between the officers of the army and the Muslim Brothers when Sadat was arrested in 1942 (Mitchell, 1969:96).

meeting that encouraged Nasser to design his plan for the great revolution (Mitchell, 1969:97). Beside Nasser there were other officers who made common cause with the Brotherhood, such as Sadat, Husayn al-Shafi'i, Kamal al-Din Husayn, and Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Ra'uf.

The role of the Brotherhood in the Palestine war in 1948 had strengthened the trust of the army in the activities of the organization. The two parties fought side by side in several battles; sometimes the Brethren did well in protecting the army from the enemies attacks when the army had been forced to retreat. The officers, for instance, Fuad Sadiq, were very impressed by the Brethren's moral. Their admiration for the Brethren was evidenced in the 'Palestine Cemetery, a monument built by the junta afterwards in which the name of the Brethren fighting in the Palestine war were inscribed. During the battle the news of Nuqrashi's decision to dissolve the Brotherhood came to the army officers in Palestine. They strongly opposed the government's will, while the Brethren continued helping the army to fight at Negeb. Brethren sources state that when news of Banna's death reached them, they 'were visited secretly by a large number of officers of varying ranks bearing on their faces the sorrow they so deeply felt' (Husayni, 1956:127).

The parties co-operated with each other once again in the battle at the Suez Canal. The Brotherhood representatives of each regional branch conferred with army officers and the officers supplied the arms to the movement.<sup>29</sup> The services of the free officers in Palestine led to the arrest of their leader, Abd al-

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29. In one well-known trial a Brother named Abd al-Qadir stated that Abd al-Nasser himself supplied the arms and that Anwar al-Sadat and Salah Salim knew of it.



Nasser, by the government of Ibrahim 'Abd al-Hadi, as Nasser was coming back from the Faluja pocket in Palestine. He was charged with training the Brotherhood in the use of arms before and during the Palestine War. Nasser denied these charges. Along with him, the Free Officers, including Fu'ad Sadiq, were arrested.

Although there was evidence that a close link existed between the Free officers and the Brotherhood, it would be a mistake to assume that the Revolution was the work of the Brotherhood and that all the Free Officers were the member of the organization. In fact, the real Free Officers, Abd al-Nasser, was never a member of the Brotherhood.<sup>30</sup> However, a number of their soldiers and officers, including Muhammad Nagib, were, in one way or the other, members of the organization. As a matter of fact, the Brotherhood and the Free Officers would never combined into one movement due to their different approach to build the Egyptian Nation.

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30. One of the member of the Organization went as far as to admit that Nasser was a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood and he had even sworn the pledge of obedience (Husayni, 1956:128).

## **Chapter three**

### **Religion and State under Nasser**

Subjective signs that Egypt was approaching a revolutionary moment in its history were seen in the late forties and early fifties in the growing appeal of radical thought and movements of the left and right. The perceived relevance of the several varieties of Marxism that took root in Egypt derived from Marxism's acceptance of aspects of the Western achievement while at the same time it called for revolt against it. Marxism sounded the call for industrialization, but for an industrialization cleansed by social revolution of the Western capitalist contagion. Further more to the people it provided a persuasive demonology to explain the disruptions and disorientations experienced in the colonial situation. And Marxism gave repression to the instinctive anarchist feeling of a society that had been profoundly dislocated in its fundamental socioeconomic structures. Marxism was not the only ideology that served to canalize the sense of social disintegration born during the colonial confrontation and its after math. The history of revolutionary politics in Egypt often reveals congeries of revolutionaries who had held Islamist as well as Marxist views. There have even been individuals who fluctuated between the two ideologies. This apparent anomaly disappears when it is realized that in Egypt the evocative power of Islamic theoretical formulations was used by the Brotherhood to appeal to the same discounted groups that might have been attracted to Marxism. Nevertheless, the socialist revolutionary success in July 1952 undoubtedly owed much to the conspiratorial skills of Nasser and his fellow Free Officers.

However, the official mythology of the revolution would have it that the Free Officers never intended to rule. Nasser in his Philosophy of the Revolution<sup>31</sup> conceptualized their purported role as that of a vanguard which, once having swept away the ancient regime, would step aside as the Egyptian people took command of their destiny. With flair he described his 'disappointment' when reality did not follow this hope and the Free Officers were 'compelled' by circumstances to retain the reins of power :

**For a long time it (the vanguard of Free Officers) waited. Crowds did eventually come, and they came in endless droves – but how different is the reality from the dream! The masses that came were disunited, divided groups of stragglers. The sacred advance toward the great objective was stalled, and the picture that emerged on that day looked dark and ominous; it boded danger. At this moment I felt with sorrow and bitterness, that task of the vanguard, far from being completed, had only begun (Nasser, 1955: 38).**

Thus from the wide array of contenders for the nationalist mantle, it was a movement of military conspirators – the Free Officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser that resulted in the monarchy being dismantled and a republic being established. The leader, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, was typical of the secular Muslim impressed by the ideologies of the West. When they took power, the Free Officers had little ideology apart from some principles formulated at the Liberation Rally in January 1953. These six principles as were incorporated in the Preamble of the Constitution of 1956 are as follow :

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31. Not long after the Revolutionary Command Council came to power in Egypt, Nasser, probably with the collaboration of his friend and adviser, the prominent Cairo journalist, Muhammad Hassanain Heikal, put together three short articles under the title, The Philosophy of the Revolution. The articles, which were quickly translated into English and published in book form, attracted much interest, particularly on the part of those who hope to find a simple definition of the aims of the Egyptian Revolution.

**The eradication of all aspects of imperialism ; the extinction of feudalism ; the eradication of monopolist and the control of capitalistic influence over the system of government ; the establishment of a strong national army ; the establishment of social justice ; and the establishment of a sound democratic society (Quoted in Sayegh, 1965:13).**

Nasserism thus rested on the creation of a strong praetorian state and on the mixture of the ideologies of Arab nationalism and socialism.

In fact, Nasser's regime (1952-1970) was the most significant attempt at the modernization and secularization of Egypt since Muhammad Ali Pasha. At the heart of the Nasserist vision of Egypt's destiny was a grasp of the necessary linkage between domestic and international politics. Such an understanding was natural to one who viewed Egypt's history from a nationalist perspective, for the country's fate had so often been decided by outside forces. Nasser now sought to exploit this link to the outside world to supplement Egypt's meager resources, while at the same time preserving his own monopoly on power.

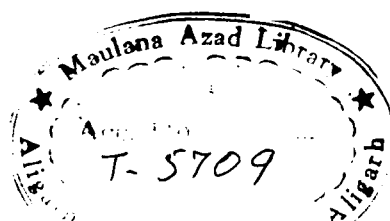
The outlines of a strategy aimed at both the necessity for development and the maintenance of Free Officer rule can be seen in Nasser's earliest writings. If Egypt's resources in themselves offered little, Nasser reasoned, Egypt's role in relation to its Arab neighbors promised a great deal. Nasser insisted that collectively the Arabs were strong as a result of several factors :the moral and material ties that bound the Arab countries into a homogeneous whole, the strategic position of the Arab countries, and Arab oil. Moreover, in a much quoted passage of Philosophy of the Revolution, written not long after the Free Officers seized power, Nasser had spoken of destiny's beckoning Egypt to play a role in the three circles of the Arab world, the Muslim world, and Africa

(Baker, 1978:44-45). Further more, Nasser was not simply satisfied with merely creating new institutions parallel with the traditional ones; his aim was to modernize the bases of legitimacy using Western and nationalist concepts, in addition to modernizing the panoply of other traditional institutions.

Nasser, therefore, ideologically rejected the theocratic formula based on Egyptian nationalism, Islamic principles, Arabism and Marxism. His major theme was to raise the level of mass Egyptian consciousness through the propagation of Arab unity and nationalism (Pan-Arabism) (Dekmejian, 1980:5). His social and economic policies were designed to place Islam at the service of the state. Although he frequently used to attack 'reactionary Muslims', and at the same time tried to subordinate Islam to socialism by alternatively emphasizing 'Arab Socialism' and 'Islamic Socialism' (Wilber, 1969:74).

However, the main important ideological direction of Nasser was of Arab nationalism, the plank on which state was guarded by the military. In his book, Philosophy of Revolution, Nasser placed Arab nationalism within the context of the West Asia :

**It is not without significance that our country is situated West of Asia, in contiguity with the Arab states with whose existence our own is interwoven. It is not without significance, too, that our country lies in northeast Africa, overlooking the Dark Continent, wherein rages a most tumultuous struggle between white colonizers and black inhabitants for control of its unlimited resources. Nor is it without significance that, when the Mongols swept away the ancient capitals of Islam, Islamic civilization and the Islamic heritage fell back on Egypt and took shelter there. Egypt protected them and saved them, while checking the onslaught of the Mongols at Ain Jalut (Nasser, 1955:113).**



Thus as visionary, Nasser was merely using Islam to underpin his secular form of Arab nationalism. The strategy was to mobilize the masses for the Liberation Rally,<sup>32</sup> while the secular elite and intellectual forces could be mobilized through Arab nationalism. In order to justify Arab nationalism he said that it was not opposed to Islam as Marxian socialism was and that 'Islam had successfully applied the first socialist experiment in the world' (Quoted in Lewy, 1974:271).

In order to reinforce Egyptian socialism<sup>33</sup> through Islamic justification, a Mufti (canon lawyer) was asked to issue a fatwa (religious edict) on the socialist laws enacted in 1961; he stated that 'private ownership is legitimate in the eyes of Islamic jurisprudence as long as the owner observes the ordinances of Allah concerning his wealth. But if he does not abide by them, the ruler is entitled to devise the laws and regulation which force him to adhere to the commandments of God' (Lewy, 1974:271). The fatwa of Mufti (to reinforce Egyptian socialism through Islamic justification) was simply to empower Nasser's hand in socialist law-making.

Immediately after the revolution, it was therefore a sheer necessity for the new regime to look for support, first to the political parties which seemed to have ideological proximity with it and which seemed most eager to co-operate.

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32. Nasser's regime created a series of national rallies or unions to mobilize popular support – the Liberation Rally, the National Union and finally the Arab Socialist Union (ASU). All were conceived as mass organizations with a monopoly of legitimate political activity. The choice of name was also significant; in each case the word 'party' was deliberately avoided, for this had powerful connotations of division and lack of national purpose (Owen, 1992:266).

33. Nasser adopted the programme of socialism, announced in the Charter of May 1962. The document explained that socialism 'is the way to social freedom; social freedom means equal opportunity to every citizen to obtain a fair share of the national wealth'. Socialism could be instrumental in eradicating feudalism, in destroying the dictatorship of capital, and in establishing social justice, entirely by peaceful means (Sharabi, 1966:129-130). For the detail of Nasser socialism See Appendix P.203.

From the beginning the free officers realized very well that the co-operation of the Muslim Brothers, who had become very powerful among the Egyptians and outside of Egypt, was necessary to the well being of the new government. For this reason the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) tried to please the Muslim Brothers in several ways. First of all, the RCC turned its attention to the case of Hasan al-Banna's murder and declared that the murderer and his accomplices would be punished. Besides, the RCC ordered the release of eleven Muslim Brothers who had been imprisoned for their terrorist activities under the royalist regime, including the two men who were punished by life sentences as the murderers of Nuqrashi Pasha in December, 1948.

The RCC also decided to invite members of the Muslim Brothers into the cabinet. However, what happened escapes precise detection, but it appears to be true that Hudaybi was notified of the RCC's decision to ask three Brothers to join Neguib's cabinet, one of whom would be Shaykh Hasan al-Baquri. Hudaybi agreed, and without consultation with the Guidance Council recommended the names of Hasan al-Ashmawi and Munir al-Dilla, both of whom were rejected by the RCC. Hudaybi then informed the Guidance Council of the government offer but not that names had already been put forward and rejected; the Council decided unanimously not to enter the government.<sup>34</sup> Baquri, who had already been appointed, since Hudaybi had raised no objections to him in the first place, conveniently absented himself from the meeting, but was dismissed from the

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34. At a later date the deputy of the Society, explaining the Council's decision not to participate in the government, made two points: 1. The fear that the Society would lose its 'popular' quality, i.e. sully itself with power; 2. The fear, hinted at by Neguib in his resistance to the idea of Brothers in the cabinet, of bringing down the wrath of foreigners and minorities on the regime and thus complicating its problem (Mitchell, 1969:108).

Society the day his appointment was made public. The appointment of Buquri and his dismissal from the Society were the only aspects of the matter which were public knowledge at the time. Immediately it appeared as though the Muslim Brothers were withdrawing their support from the regime (Mitchell, 1969:107). Since then the attitude of the Brotherhood toward the government remained passive. Some Brotherhood branches even received the order that from then on they should adopt a negative attitude to the government. At the same time the Brothers divided among themselves into two different groups, one supported the government and one, led by Hudaybi, opposed it.

The Muslim Brothers had hoped that when the former regime collapsed, it would take at least a leading role in the new government. But the hope was barred by the weakness of its own internal divisions.<sup>35</sup> Hudaybi was not as decisive about the politics as Banna, moreover he had powerful opponents within the Organization (Manfield, 1965:75).

In the wake of indifferent attitude of the Brethren towards the government the main proposals of the Muslim Brothers were turned down flatly by the RCC. Hudaybi tried to persuade Naguib (President) to promise to establish a new Egyptian constitution based on Islamic principles; which he firmly refused to do when he tried another way by telling Naguib that all the proposed laws should be sent to a Brethren committee to be considered and approved before they were publicly proclaimed if the government wanted full co-operation from the

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35 The internal conflict within the Muslim Brotherhood organization appeared since 1948 when al-Hudaybi was the General Guide. The loyalty expressed by Hudaybi to King Farouk created condemnation of one faction among the members of the Brotherhood who considered this as a deviation from the faith and disregard for the martyr's blood. Thus the internal conflict between al-Hudaybi and other leading members led to weakness, to some extent, of the Brethren and it barred the Brethren from the hope of taking a leading role in the new government (Maluleem, 1979:150-151).



Muslim Brothers, this was strongly opposed by Nasser. Moreover, the government turned down the Brotherhood's demands for the prohibition of gambling and alcohol and merely issued laws limiting their dangers to society (Naguib, 1955:156). Henceforth, the gap between the Muslim Brothers and the government widened and sometimes the former worked secretly against the latter. In asking for such a major say in government policies, the Muslim Brothers might have overestimated their power. They tried to control the Revolutionary movement and were disappointed.

The old constitution was, however, annulled in December 1952. An assembly of 100 members including three Brothers, was appointed in order to consider the issuing of the new constitution. The Muslim Brothers magazine al-Da'wa called for a new constitution which was based on Islamic principles and Hedaybi requested the government to ask for the public opinion whether the people preferred the Islamic law or the western code, but his request was rejected. The idea of Islamic state was also rejected by the RCC. Nasser saw no compromise possible on the question of retreating the country from the harsh realities into a self sufficient but poor and isolated land. His ideal was to industrialize Egypt and to increase her power as the leader of the Arab World (Joesten, 1960:98).

Rashad Muhanna was one among the strong supporters of the Muslim Brothers in the idea of the establishment of Islamic state. He was the leader of the unsuccessful revolt of 1947, who refused to join the Free Officers at the critical stage of the July Revolution. He was dismissed from the Regency, because he had a close relation with the Muslim Brothers and had attacked the

RCC's agrarian reforms. As a result he was arrested, released, and again arrested after waging a campaign for the abolition of the 1923 and for an Islamic constitution. This time he was sentenced to life imprisonment (Naguib, 19:175-178). The unfair treatment imposed on him created more hostile feelings among the anti-government groups, with Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Ra'uf and Ma'aruf al-Hadari as their leaders. The RCC was, in turn, displeased with the intervening of the Muslim Brotherhood, because they contradicted the government's plans and at the same time it seemed that they were showing their distrust of the government's competence.

In the wake of its opposition from the political parties the government issued a law regulating the political parties, mainly to control the Wafd Party and partially the Muslim Brothers. Under this new law the rights, powers, limitations and obligations of all political parties were defined in seventeen articles. The parties were to be required to make public their objectives and statutes, the names of their founders or presidents and their financial recourses and their funds were to be deposited in a publicly recognized bank. Parties were, furthermore, forbidden to own real estate; they were not to be allowed to support any military or semi-military formation, and they were to operate under the joint jurisdiction of the Ministers of Interior, Social Affairs, and justice (Kerr, 1963:43).

In January 1953 the government ordered the abolition of all existing parties and groups except the Society of the Muslim Brothers.<sup>36</sup> In a related move

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36. Hamroosh reported that 'Nasser told the Minister of the Interior, Sulaiman Hafidh, that 'the Ikhwan was one of the greatest supporters of the movement...contributed greatly to it, and still offers continuous support' in view of this, he asked the Minister to find a way to exempt the Ikhwan from the ban on political parties and activities (Ismael, Tareq Y. and Ismael, Jacqueline S., 1985:302).

it announced the creation of the Liberation Rally (hay'at al-tahrir). A government supported 'people's movement' to implement the slogan of 'unity' in the nation, the Rally was also to become the nucleus of a political organization to replace the abolished parties. As it turned out – perhaps not merely by accident – it also became the nucleus, along with other more obviously military organizations later created, of the regime's civil security forces. This was much that the Muslim Brothers had feared at the time, for obviously the creation of the Liberation Rally challenged its role as 'civil protector' of the regime. It also proposed to challenge the Society's position as popular voice on the ideological level, for the government intended to make the Rally its instrument to win over the hesitant and doubtful nation to the cause of the revolution (Mitchell, 1969:109-110).

Thus it was obvious that the government concentrated on setting up this new body, probably as a great rival to the Muslim Brotherhood. Within a year, some 1200 Liberation Rally centres existed inside the country. The Muslim Brotherhood charged that the Rally centres constituted superfluous – supported 'people's movement' to implement the slogan of 'unity' in the nation, the Rally was also to become the nucleus of a political organization to replace the abolished parties. As it turned out – perhaps not merely by accident – it also became the nucleus, along with other more obviously military organizations later and undesirable duplications of their own branches. Presumably the Brethren felt that the government was challenging them on their own ground by offering a rival social welfare, and educational Programme to the masses. At a meeting of the Brotherhood Secretariat in February 1953, individual Muslim Brothers were authorized to join the Liberation Rally; but it was decided that the Muslim

Brotherhood would maintain its independence as an organization vis-a-vis the Liberation movement (Harris, 1964:214).

After the government had dissolved all the political parties, the Muslim Brothers again asked to have their representatives in the Cabinet. On receiving the refusal from the government in this case, the Muslim Brotherhood launched its attack against the government in the press. The government also gripped this opportunity to put down the Muslim Brothers. In June 1953, the government's Intelligence Office found out secret contacts between the Muslim Brothers and the three subversive movements: one in the army, one in the police office and one among the army's non-commissioned officers. The government was reported that these groups had planned to discredit the government and create hatred against it. The RCC sent a warning of the Guidance Office; but the Brothers did not take heed of this warning.

During the spring of that year the Muslim Brothers seized every chance they could to increase the number of their members, but with great care. They further concentrated on the concepts of dedication to Islam, purification of the spirit, and Brothers loyalty. But when the government proclaimed Egypt to be a Republic<sup>37</sup> on June 19, 1953, it disturbed the Muslim Brotherhood very much for they wanted Egypt to be an Islamic state instead of such a secular one.

For almost the whole year of 1953 despite their mutual differences, explicitly the relationship between the Muslim Brothers and the government was

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37. The establishment of the Republic formalized direct military rule as four leading RCC members took over key ministries in the government : Nasser, Deputy Premier, and Interior Minister ; 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi, War Minister ; Abdul-Hakim Amir, Commander in Chief ; and Salah Salim, Minister of National Guidance and Sudanese Affairs, while Neguib became president and Prime Minister (Dekejian, 1972:25).

on the whole cordial. The feelings of the regime towards the Muslim Brothers remained positive but their basis shifted from friendship to the need. Policy makers in the Brothers apparently saw it this way. The Muslim Brothers had sent a small delegation to visit Nasser in order to congratulate the government on its move and to discuss the future situation in the country; the terms of the discussion suggested to the government a demand by the Muslim Brothers for a commanding voice in affairs of state. It was immediately cleared that the exemption of the Brothers from the decree (the abolition of all the existing parties) had both objectively and subjectively created a new power situation in Egypt. The fact that the government was unprepared to accept the implications of its move became another crucial factor in the privately disintegrating relations between the two groups (Mitchell, 1969:111).

When the government established the National Guard, a large number of the members of the Brotherhood participated in it. But implicitly, there was a hint of disorder behind the friendly disguise. The government in trying to clear the misunderstanding among the people that it was influenced by the Muslim Brothers, launched an official campaign 'to unify the nation' with a new slogan : 'Religion for God and the country for all' (al-din li'llah wa'l watan li'l-Jami'). But in fact, the difficulty the government faced in dealing with the Muslim Brothers made it believe that it was necessary to launch a religious movement of its own to vie with that of the Muslim Brothers because the people still had their strong traditional and emotional adherence to Islam. The government wanted to win the people to its side, this was the reason why the RCC wisely wanted to

attach its movement with the Islamic ideals and to show that it was itself dedicated to the principles of Islam.

The rift between the Brotherhood and the revolutionary government started widen. According to Abd al-Adhim Ramadhan, there were four interrelated reasons for the rift. First, the Muslim Brotherhood was negotiating with the British on the evacuation from the Canal Zone. While these negotiations were not official, they were not clandestine either. They seem to have had the tacit approval of the RCC. The rift developed when the positions of the government and the Ikhwan on British evacuation came into conflict.

Second, the Ikhwan was proselytizing for membership in the army and the police, in effect creating a potential fifth column in the armed forces. Third, the well-armed paramilitary force of the Ikhwan continued to function, posing a serious challenge to the new regime. Finally, all of the above were brought to the fore when the Ikhwan initiated contact with General Muhammad Najuib, the then leader of the RCC, to form an alliance against Abd al-Nasser. As a result, in January 1954 the Revolutionary Command Council declared the Ikhwan to be a political party and ordered its disbandment. Al-Hudaybi and 449 other Brethren were arrested (Ismael & Ismael, 1985:75-76).

The arrest of the Muslim Brotherhood's members evoked country-wide criticism and Naguib was also critical about it. Nasser, thereafter kept up the pressure. He had Najuib stripped of all his responsibilities, made him finally ousted and imprisoned (Bari, 1995:48). Naguib's removal evoked a nationwide protest. Large scale demonstrations took place demanding his reinstatement and the release of political prisoners. The opposition of all shades – The Muslim

Brothers, the socialists, and the Wafdists got united to demand the immediate 'restoration of democracy' with Naguib as president and arrest of Nasser.<sup>38</sup>

Commenting on the political motive behind Muslim Brother's call for 'restoration of democracy' Warburg remarked :

**They (Muslim Brothers) had allied themselves previously, first with King Farouk, and later with the Free Officers, since they regarded democracy, secular constitutions, liberal political parties and communism as anathema to Islam. The Brother's leadership was thus not really fighting to restore democracy but rather attempting to curb the RCC's exaggerated powers (Quoted in Alam, 1998:78-79).**

Sensing the popular mood of the country, the military junta released all political prisoners and announced its decision to restore democratic rights, to allow the establishment of political parties and to hold free elections and to dissolve itself and transfer power to the people's representatives.

However, the 'Manshiya incident'<sup>39</sup> of October, 1954, presented a golden opportunity to the RCC to deal severely with the Muslim Brotherhood. That incident also marked the emergence of Nasser as the strongman within the RCC and provided an occasion to finally do away with General Naguib. Nasser exploited the incident to the fullest extent and dealt a severe blow to the existence of Muslim Brotherhood. Along with the dissolution of the society, several of its leaders and active members were executed and many condemned to long terms of

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38. On the Power struggle between RCC, Naguib and the Muslim Brotherhood, See Gordon, Joel (1992) *Nasser's Blessed Movement : Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution*, Oxford University Press.

39. Manshiya incident was called after the site in Alexandria – in which one Mahumud 'Abd al-Latif, a Brother and member of the 'secret organization' attempted to assassinate Nasser while he was addressing some 10,000 workers in Alexandria.

imprisonment. While dismantling the Brothers' armed threat the regime also moved to undermine its grass-root support. On 10 December, 1954 the day after the six Brothers were hanged, the Social Affairs Ministry assumed administrative control of the Brotherhood welfare centres on the pretext that they were a front of clandestine activity (Gordon, 1992:184).

Thus, a combination of factors brought successive victories to the Free Officers in their war against the Brotherhood. While a quick implementation of some policies related to social justice and land reforms further isolated the Brotherhood, the Nationalization of the Suez Canal and his defiant anti-imperialist posture made Nasser the 'hero' of the whole Arab world. If the Manshiya incident strengthened and consolidated his position, the Suez crisis endowed him with 'Charisma'. Bari has rightly observed that ;

**So decidedly had the social bases of the Brotherhood slipped towards the side of the Free Officers in the course of two years, that when Nasser finally struck at the Brotherhood, no demonstration of public support in their favour took place in a marked departure from the experience through most of the 1940s and early 1950s (Bari, 1995:48).**

Nasser's success in suppressing the Muslim Brothers without encountering any resistance from the Egyptian masses can be attributed to many factors. First of all, most of his aims were consistent with a broad national consensus. Indeed, Nasser was able to gain popular support because he embraced a policy that embodied two feelings that were widespread throughout Egypt. The first of these was a concern for the welfare of the peasant class from which most of the military officers had come. In conjunction with this, Nasser's plans for the improvement of social conditions in the countryside and his industrialization and



urbanization schemes bolstered his popularity among the masses (Hourani, 1970:358ff). For these people, positioned below the upper echelon and deprived by the corrupt landowning classes of participation in the social and political life of the time, Nasser was an inspired hero.

In almost every walk of life he instigated a revolution: in land reform, in industrialization, and in the countryside expansion of social services. He had inaugurated the nationalization process in 1961; by 1964 almost all big companies of any kind had been nationalized. In agriculture, however, Nasser did not envisage public ownership of land, but rather an increase in the number of farmers and an extension of the cooperative system. By 1965, successive agrarian reform laws and other government measures had made some 1,250,000 acres (about twenty percent of the cultivable area in 1950) available for redistribution (Stephens, 1971:365ff). Thus, large sections of the rural population profited to some extent from the expansion of social services in the countryside.

Nasser's energies were also visible in his policies on education. As new schools were built at the rate of one a day, the number of children attending primary school increased from 1,300,000 in 1952 to 3,400,000 (1,300,000 of them girls) in 1966 (Stephens, 1971:375,377). The successful and rapid expansion of education must be cited as one of Nasser's most positive achievements.

The second national longing which Nasser embodied lay in the field of foreign policy. Here he eloquently expressed the sentiments of the majority of Egyptians (and other Arabs as well) through his insistence on decolonization and neutrality. During the 1950s and 1960s Nasser was able to gain popular support due to his determined struggle against Egypt's historical masters. His stand,

against British and French colonialism (as seen in the Suez War of 1956 and the Algerian revolution) and his embrace of pan-Arabism were expressions of the demands of the rising intelligensia, the new “middle class”, and the masses. Each had an interest in shaking off colonial control; all of them were seized by the spirit of Afro-Asian independence and wished to increase Egypt’s strength in the world by heightening its influence in the Arab countries, where Britain in the Arab East and France in the Maghrib would be its chief rivals.

Nasser’s pan-Arabism was therefore dictated by the Egyptian *raison d’etat*; its vibrant energies were marshaled by a consideration of Egypt’s strategic interests, and by the needs of the rising intellectual elites, including those of the Muslim Brothers who deepened Egypt’s involvement in pan-Arab issues, particularly the Palestine question. In other words, Nasser created a broad national consensus in support of his economic and foreign policy by broadening the regime’s social base domestically while capitalizing on his image as the preeminent leader of the larger Arab world in its common struggle for independence. Notwithstanding this broad Arab consensus, however, the defeat of the Muslim Brothers in the 1950s can also attributed to Nasser’s total domination of the efficient apparatus of the state. Although the regime was drawn from or acted in the interests of the petite bourgeoisie and the rural middle class, it prove fully capable of sidestepping their concerns when expedient by exerting state control in order to achieve its more immediate ends. Suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood is one prominent example of the regime’s successful domination of the body politic.

With the newly found charisma, Nasser turned towards the 'reform' of religious establishments and to utilize them to serve as the ideological-political instrument of the state's regime to propagate and justify the latter's socio-economic and religious policies. Unlike the past, now it was the modern Islam of the rulers that was to be propagated and enforced, not the mere traditional Islam of the Ulama.

Thus, al-Azhar gained its importance especially after the clash with the Muslim Brethren in October 1954. In crushing the 1,700 cells which the Brethren claimed to have had in the Egyptian countryside, Nasser and his colleagues needed the blessings of the ulama and their cooperation both at the center of government and in helping to mobilize the local imams and kuttabs (teachers) to the support of their regime. Indeed the 'Free Officers' soon learned, with the help of al-Azhar, to copy the techniques so successfully used by the Brethren, of having their Friday sermons preached in the village mosques throughout Egypt (Mayfield, 1971:53-54).

The importance of the Azharite establishment was also demonstrated in the frequent visits of members of the Revolutionary Command Council, including Nasser, to the shaykhs of al-Azhar, and their not less frequent attendance at the al-Azhar Friday prayers (Crecellius, 1966:34). The result of this dependence was the delay in reforms aimed at curtailing the independent status of the ulama. A brief look at some of these reforms indicates that the gradual undermining of the ulama's independence started with the abolition of the family Waqfs, as early as 1952. But the next blow came only in January 1956, when the officers felt secure enough to abolish the shari'a courts, and in 1957 to nationalize

the waqf Khayri (public endowments), thus undermining the economic basis of the Islamic establishment, and hence curtailing its influence even further. The abolition of the shari'a courts was blessed by shaykh Abd al-Rahman Taj of al-Azhar as a 'liberating step'. Even more humiliating, as far as the Islamic establishment was concerned, was the reform of al-Azhar itself in 1961, turning it into a government controlled university. This act, bitterly opposed by many of the helpless ulama, received the official blessings of Shaykh al-Azhar himself, Mahmud Shaltut, who denounced the opposition for using Islam as a profession while '...the new law includes a solution for every field....It wants Islam to be revived, ulama to be of strong faith, living for its sake and not by means of it...' (Quoted in Rejwan, 1974:38, 46-47).

In placing al-Azhar under the overall supervision of the President's office, one of its prime roles was both enhanced and facilitated. It enforced al-Azhar's role as a major channel of communication between Egypt and the Arab and Muslim world and as the leading Muslim interpreter of Nasser's revolution. While, through the close supervision of al-Azhar's affairs, the president's office could rely on the Azharite hierarchy to preach the gospel of Arabism and socialism as synonymous with the aims and principles of the Islamic revolution. Conservative Muslim scholars such as Muhammad al-Bahi, one time chancellor of al-Azhar, came out in support of Nasser's Arab Socialism stating that it was a reiteration of Islamic values. Others like Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat, editor of Majallat al-Azhar, claimed that Nasser, like the Mahdi, had come to stamp out corruption and tyranny and to establish social justice based on Islam. Thus, it was

a clear indication that Nasser had succeeded in harnessing this important body of opinion in the service of his revolution (Vatikiotis, 1965:138-145).

The growing subordination of the ulama was, in the first few years, entrusted to the Ministry of Waqfs under a leading Muslim Brother, Shaykh Ahmad Hasan al-Baquri, who had jumped on the 'Free Officers' band wagon when the rupture with the Brethren occurred in 1953-1954. Later, while Nasser was still in power, even this symbolic political position was entrusted to a retired army officer. The ministry of Waqfs supervised most of the religious institutions, including all mosques, both public and private, which, since the waqfs were abolished, relied on the government for their upkeep. One might have assumed that under a regime which declared Arab socialism as its ideology, the mosques would at best have maintained their pre-revolutionary standing. Surprisingly enough the number of mosques and their personnel increased considerably in the first ten years after the revolution. In the years 1954-1963 the total number of employees and officials in all government mosques, increased from 6,919 to 12,357 (Berger, 1970:43-44 ; Borthwick, 1967:299-313). This is of special significance if one take into account that the biggest increase was in the number of imams (preachers) one of whose tasks was to spread the messianic gospel of Nasserism throughout Egypt.

The military regime's political interference in Sufi orders began in 1955 with the realization that the administrative organization of the Sufi orders could be used to combat the opposition of the Brotherhood as well as to strengthen and widen its own base of support by stimulating and favouring the adherents of conceptions of Islam that were rooted in and partly identical with some of the

central conceptions in popular Islam (Jong, 1983:196). Thus the Sufi orders known for their affiliation with members of the Brotherhood or the Royal Palace faced Nasser's wrath, while Sufi orders having a pro-regime outlook were promoted and benefited due to their proximity to the government authority. Muhammad Mahmud Ilwan, the head of al-Ilwaniyya al-khalwatiyy Sufi order and a close friend of Abd al-Hakim Amir, and RCC member charged with the supervision and reform of Sufi orders, become the head of the Supreme Sufi Council (S.S.C.) in 1957. It was the highest body of all Sufi orders which regulated the activities of Sufi orders and its decisions were binding over them. Ilwan's becoming of head of S.S.C. marked the revival of organized Islamic mysticism in Egypt. This could be seen in the appearance of an official Sufi periodical, al Islam wal tasawwuf, an official recognition of several Sufi orders, an increase in their membership and an increase in the number of mawalid (saint birthday) celebrations (Jong, 1983:196). The Guide to Sufism published in 1958 by the S.S.C. thus hailed the 'blessed revolution' of 1952 as the greatest hope for the nation and claimed that Sufism continued to flourish in Egypt due to God's blessing and support and due to the encouragement and help of the Revolution and its great leader (Berger, 1970:70-71).

In the wake of the regime's opposition, a clear indication of the total submissiveness of the Islamic hierarchy under Nasser, was their acquiescence with the 'National Charter' of 1962. While Islam, as in the 1956 constitution, continued to be decreed the religion of the state, its general treatment in the Charter was rather ambivalent. Thus, the Ottoman Caliphate was defined as 'colonialist' and 'reactionary', clearly giving no compliment for the last universal

Muslim Empire. The humiliation of Islam was even further emphasized when, in the chapter dealing with foreign relations, Islam and the United Nations were treated as equals, once again hardly a compliment (Rejwan, 1974:35-37). National Charter probably was a turning point in the relationship between Nasser and the Islamic establishment. Indeed, the Syrian Muslim scholar, Salah al-Din al-Munajjid in his book entitled The Socialist Deception, denounced the attempts made by Egyptian scholars and by the Islamic leadership to defend Arab Socialism and Nasser's National Charter as synonymous with orthodox Islam (Quoted in Rejwan, 1974:41).

Thus Nasser's Egypt was definitely moving in an opposite direction. Indeed, two years after the National Charter was endorsed, the new provisional constitution of Egypt was promulgated in March 1964 and did not even contain a mention of the Shari'a (Altman, 1980:6).

To such a degree, it would seem that the Islamic establishment, having already endorsed the regime's policies curtailing their own status, were in the 1960s giving Islamic sanction to the secularization of Egyptian society. Such Muslim leaders as Shaykh al-Azhar Mahmud Shaltut provided in effect the Islamic legitimization for every Nasserist policy. However, while it was easy enough to force the Cairo – centered religious leadership to cooperate with the government, the same did not apply to the thousands of the rank and file urban and rural religious functionaries. These lived too close to the people and hence were not willing to change their traditional attitudes or belief system, which in many cases clashed with government policies.

In 1965, S.S.C. attacked the Muslim Brotherhood and accused it of a terrorist conspiracy against the regime. In fact, the S.S.C. under the leadership of Ilwan, was increasingly used by the Arab Socialist Union(A.S.U)<sup>40</sup> to distribute its ideological propaganda throughout Egypt. Since its inception in 1961, the A.S.U. was involved in organizing the mawalid, which were used for propaganda of the regime by means of pamphlets, banners, and public speeches (Jong, 1983:196). Moreover, the staging of hadras<sup>41</sup> in the mosques was made subject to permission from the Ministry of Awqaf (Jong, 1983:197).

Nasser also clearly visualized the political role of Islam in Egypt's foreign policy. He stated as early 1954, 'as I stood before the Kaaba...I fully recognize the need for a radical change of our conception of the pilgrimage...the pilgrimage should have a potential political power' (Quoted in Dessouki, 1983:86). He envisioned an 'Islamic Circle', which came third after Arab and Africa, to be composed of 'those hundreds of millions of Muslims, all wedded into a homogenous whole by the same faith and whose cooperation would ensure for them and their Brethren in Islam unlimited power. Thus as early as 1955, Nasser along with King Saud and Ghulam Muhammad, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, created an Islamic Congress with its headquarters at Cairo and whose objective according to Sadat (who served as the first Secretary General of the Congress) was 'to work for closer links between Arab and Muslim countries as well as for certain foreign policy objectives of Egypt such as frustrating the

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40. For the Arab Socialist Union (A.S.U.), See Baker, R.W. (1978) *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution under Nasser and Sadat*. Cambridge : Havard Univ. Press

41. Presence used broadly by mystics as synonym of being in the presence of Allah. Derwishes call their regular Friday service "hadra".



Baghdad Pact',<sup>42</sup> (al-Sadat, 1978:136). Another Islamic body, created within the Ministry of Awqaf in 1960, was Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs whose aim was to 'extend Islam's brilliant rays of light from the United Arab Republic to all quarters of the World, East and West equally, regardless of race and colour (Berger, 1970:48). The council published numerous books and pamphlets on Islamic themes and distributed them throughout the Muslim and Arab World. These and many other Islamic organizations were created with the aim of securing the support of the ulama to enhance the regime's legitimacy and to isolate the Muslim Brotherhood politically and to project Nasser's Egypt as 'the model of regenerated Islam and the harbinger of another Islamic Age' (Vatikiotis, 1965:122,128).

Al-Azhar's role in Egypt's foreign policy was clearly recognized by the Nasser regime, especially during the Arab Cold War of the sixties. Article 2 of a 1961 law stated 'Al-Azhar carries the burden of Islamic mission to all nation' (Dessouki, 1983:87). In March 1964 Al-Azhar sponsored the first Afro-Asian Islamic Conference which was attended by 44 countries. It discussed the religious aspects of the struggle against imperialism (Warburg, 1985:206). The budget for scholarships to foreign students to enable them to attend al-Azhar increased from 15,000 to 375,000 in 1963, and in 1964, al-Azhar had more than 200 ulama all over the world (Dessouki, 1983:88). Al-Azhar also established a daily 13-hour radio programme, 'The voice of Islam', for reciting the verses from the Qur'an. A

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42. Baghdad Pact was mutual-security pact between Iraq and Turkey signed in February 1955. The alliance created by the pact was joined by the United Kingdom, Iran and Pakistan later that year, creating the Middle East Treaty Organization, which later became the Central Treaty Organization (<http://encarta.com/find/Concise.asp?z=2&ti=761586829>)

year later the programme was expanded throughout Africa and included broadcasts in many indigenous languages. Islamic cultural centres sponsored by Egypt were established in many of the African Muslim countries.

The heightened Islamic political propaganda in the early 60s on the part of Nasser should also be seen in the context of the Yemen Civil War (1964-65) where the Nasserite forces were waging war against the Saudi-backed Yemini monarchy. Islam during the phase of the Arab cold war was identified with anti-imperialism and served as a political instrument in Nasser's struggle for hegemony and leadership in the Muslim Arab countries.

At the political plane to bridge the widening gap between the regime and Islamic activists, Nasser attempted to reconcile with the Islamists. Thus in September, 1956 the Egyptian government attempted to make negotiations with the Muslim Brotherhood who were in the prison with a view to change their mind and turn them to support the government. They were also persuaded to keep the Brotherhood as a pure religious organization and permanently disbanded their secret military organ. But the attempt of the government appeared to be fruitless since the prominent leaders of the Muslim Brothers had never ignored its ambitions. Lieutenant Colonel 'Abd al-Ra'uf, one of Nasser's close associates, who had escaped the execution in 1954, became an important opponent of the Egyptian government.<sup>43</sup> Since 1959 there was an attempt to regroup the movement once again.

In 1960 some of the Muslim Brothers' prisoners were released.

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43. Lieutenant Colonel 'Abd al-Ra'uf, one of Nasser's early associate, had disappeared and become a dangerous opponent. He was well-versed in terrorist tactics, there was also an active group of Brothers in Damascus under the leadership of the Association's General Secretary, 'Abd al-Hakim 'Abidin.

They had completed five-year of imprisonment and were called the 'group of five'. In 1961 and 1963 more members of the Brothers were again released by the amnesty issued before the general election. However, among these Brothers the idea of terrorist action began to form once again. Matters came to a head when the three important motivators of the Muslim Brothers, Sayyid Qutb, Isma'il al-Sharif, and Said Ramadan, were released in 1964.

Immediately after their release the three of them moved to Jordan and met at the headquarters of the Islamic Conference in Jerusalem. At that time Sa'id Ramadan acted as the Chairman of the Executive Bureau of the Conference and Isma'il al-Sharif was its Secretary. There they started plotting together. When Sayyid Qutb returned to Egypt, the other two were still in Jerusalem, and secret contacts took place between them in two ways by letters with implicit codes and through messengers that traveled between Cairo and Jerusalem. The two brothers, Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad Qutb hence emerged as the new leaders of the Muslim Brothers terrorist wing (Arab Observer, December 1965:8-9). They contacted with the leaders of the erstwhile Baghdad Pact and were patronized by it for the necessary funds: Sa'id Ramadan granted an aid to Qutb worth about 4,000 pounds (Arab Observer, September 1965:10). These funds were given to the Muslim Brothers in Egypt for the expenses for their secret activities, among them were the plan of carrying out sabotage actions upon the general public organization and some government headquarters, the plan to urge the people to take part in Coup to change the government and the plan of assassination of Nasser (Arab Observer, December 1965:9).

For the last mentioned plan, a plot was broadly laid out by Qutb, to explode the train which would carry Nasser from Cairo to Alexandria to deliver his speech on the Revolution Day. Qutb took active steps to materialize the plan (an underground organization was formed by him). He himself was expecting to do the work, along with his two assistants, Muhammad Fuad Ibrahim and Ahmad Hasan Abul Ela. The plan however failed and the 96 detonators found in Qutb's possession. Thus he was charged to be one among the three main persons responsible for this terrible plot. Besides, thousands were arrested and twenty six were reportedly tortured to death. They were accused of planning to assassinate the President and sabotage all the government installations (Joesten, 1960:78).

The bill of indictment was issued against them on the basis that:

**They have all taken part in an intended crime to alter the state constitution and the system of government through the use of force, which is the crime stipulated in article 87 of the Penal Code.... This they have sought to do by forming underground organizations, assassinating the President of the U.A.R. and instigating rebellion.... (Arab Observer, No.287 December, 1965:9).**

After the purgings, many conferences were held by the Arab Socialist Union (A.S.U.) in many parts of Egypt to explain matters concerning the Muslim Brothers. The conferences tried to blame the Muslim Brothers as a political party under the guise of religion, which acted in every way against Islamic teachings. Shaykh Hasan Mam'un, the Great Imam of al-Azhar, also issued a statement explaining the negative view of Islam taken by the Muslim Brothers. In brief, he said that Islam was against such kind of violence and vengeance (Arab Observer, No.275 September 1965:11).

However, the execution of the Brothers caused many protest demonstrations in several countries such as Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. All this might be an evidence that the dissolution of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt did not, in fact, decrease its activities in other countries in the Arab World; there were, besides, other active bodies throughout the Muslim World who were sympathetic to the unfortunate fate of the Egyptian Brotherhood (Husayni, 1956:151).

In fact, the Free Officers appeared to produce a sense of an Egyptian history that was made by Egypt, not by others, and that referred forward to a series of inevitable nationalist victories over colonialism and a reordering of the entire political map of the West Asia, not back to the time of an 'original' Islamic state.

This ideological control exerted during the Nasser years depended for its efficacy not only on the state but on the conviction of the mass of the people that history was being autonomously realized by Egyptians (for the first time for many centuries), that the ruler did incarnate a capacity to resist external and internal forces identified with oppression and exploitation, and that the gain embodied in Egypt's new position in the world was worth the price paid.

That price included the failure – or, as some would say, the refusal – to develop any genuine political party or movement from the base or to attempt seriously to politicize the Egyptian masses. It seems that in practice the state was, therefore, always seen as a separate entity acting on society from above, despite the identification of the person of the leader as an overarching symbol of the unity of society. Furthermore, a bureaucratic - managerial class control of major sectors

of the economy and the emergence of army officers as an elite and privileged stratum were very tangible evidence of a new kind of hierarchy in Egypt.

The socialist measures introduced by Nasser - particularly in land reform - contributed to a substantial reduction in the profound socio-economic inequalities in Egypt. However, the unpopular by-products of socialist transformation were a massive growth in public bureaucracy, tight controls on political participation, and the suppression of political opposition. In addition, Nasser's heavy commitment to foreign policy issues placed a substantial burden on Egypt's limited resources. In spite of these limitations, however, Nasser's regime continued to enjoy the unqualified support of the masses (Ismail & Ismail, 1985:105-106).

After June 1967, largely as a result of Egypt's catastrophic defeat in the Six-day War against Israel, Nasser's 'messianic' aura, or the remnants of it, was even further tarnished. His evacuation of Yemen, where Egypt had for five years fought a losing and expensive battle without any benefits and with much bloodshed, in a way symbolized Nasser's end as the first and most dominant Arab-Muslim leader and ideologue of the twentieth century. Hence, the first Islamic Summit Conference, in September 1969, was convened in Rabat and not in Cairo, and its headquarters were in Jedda, under the auspices of the hated 'reactionary' Saudis. Nasser opposed the convening of such a conference in 1966, labelling it an 'imperialist plot'. But in 1969 Nasser was no longer in a position to call the tune. The Islamic Summit's advocating the return to the pure values of Islam, as the only way of saving the Arabs from further humiliation, clearly implied a

condemnation and a challenge to Nasser's Arabism and Socialism (Warburg, 1983:141).

Indeed, Arab socialism under Nasser appeared as a new working ideology which could supersede tradition and push the Egyptian people forward to social progress and economic growth. But, the failure of the regime were too many to be simply by-passed: at home agrarian reforms, massive investments, the nationalization programme and the development of education and health services all contributed to a more equitable distribution of national wealth. Yet, poverty did not disappear, demographic problems became more pressing than ever, bureaucracy inhibited efficiency, corruption among the ruling elite (though not of Nasser personally) grew evident, and the oppressive nature of the police state consumed most of the thin air that had originally been left for the intellectual to breathe. Internationally, Nasser incited many Arabs against him, was at odds with the superpowers and with other European nations, was twice bitterly defeated in war and ultimately failed in his pan-Arab programme.

When the pendulum swung back, some people wondering that what had happened to many years of revolution in Egypt. Islam had indeed turned out to be a much stronger force in domestic policies than many would have admitted two decades before; the national essence, local tradition and the religious commitment of the populace indeed survived ideological cosmetics thrust upon them. This was precisely the predicament that Sadat and his successor had to face and contend with.

## Chapter Four

### Sadat and Contemporary Islamic Activism

After Nasser's death in September 1970, Anwar al-Sadat was officially appointed president on 15 October 1970. As Sadat moved to consolidate his power, he was severely burdened by two handicaps. Not only did he come to power with an unheroic reputation, but he was also to take charge of a stalled revolution. However, the initial though short-lived smoothness of Sadat's assumption of power had been possible because key personalities such as Ali Sabri, former vice president and vice-premier of Arab Socialist Union (A.S.U.), regarded him as the man least likely to disturb their privileged positions. Furthermore, as a veteran Free Officer placed by Nasser in the formal, constitutional position to succeed him, he would be an effective symbol of continuity. Sadat's public demeanor at first had reinforced the impression that he would be an unthreatening successor to Nasser. Gradually the self-effacing Sadat began to signal strength and self-confidence by acting independently on key issues. He took new initiatives aimed at improving domestic economic condition and relations with the United States in order to bring American pressure to bear on Israel; and he gave the full weight of his support to the Arab Federation with Syria and Libya.

It was the issue of federation with Syria and Libya that the conspirators used as a pretext for their confrontation with Sadat. The major figures who coalesced in opposition to Sadat were Ali Sabri; Sami Sharaf, Nasser's primary aide; Muhammad Fayek, minister of information; Muhsin Abul



Nur, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Arab Socialist Union; Labib Shukair, speaker of the National Assembly; General Muhammad Fawzi, minister of defense; and Sharawi Gomaa, minister of the interior. A first showdown came in the spring of 1971, at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the A.S.U. Sadat found his federation proposal sharply attacked by Sabri, Abul Nur, Shukair, and Gomaa. There he was able to prevail only by referring the matter to the party central committee.

In retrospect it was puzzling that, having fully alerted Sadat to their opposition, the conspirators failed to move against him immediately. Sadat seized the initiative. In his May Day speech the president openly and threateningly spoke of individuals and groups:

**Concealing themselves behind slogans and maneuvers in order to establish centers of power so as to impose their control over the people after the people acting with Gamal Abdel Nasser had overthrown all the centers of power in order that the people themselves might remain the sole masters of their destiny (Quoted in Baker, 1978:125).**

Responding to the scarcely veiled warning in the speech, Sabri and the others resigned *en masse*, most likely intending thereby to embarrass Sadat. Efforts were also made to organize mass demonstrations drawn from the A.S.U. and the police apparatus. But there was no strong unity among the powerful men who opposed Sadat. Entrenched in their respective centers of power, they were highly suspicious of one another and found it impossible to act together effectively to defeat the president. Sadat moved rapidly. On May 14<sup>th</sup> the entire group of conspirators was arrested. Their trial ended in December 1971 with ninety-one former officials and leaders were sentenced (Waterbury, 1973:2). Moreover,

Nasserites and other leftist elements (particularly those known to be sympathetic to Ali Sabri), within the government, the Arab Socialist Union and the official press, were demoted or removed from their posts.

After ridding himself of Ali Sabri and his allies, Sadat conducted his presidency without the constraints that Nasser had faced. Furthermore, in order to destroy the myth of Egypt's cowardice and Israel's invincibility, Sadat launched his October 6, 1973 attack against Israel. The action started in the Sinai desert, the part of Egypt overrun and occupied by Israel in the June 1967 War. The Egyptian forces were successful in pushing back the Israeli, and in destroying many tanks and planes. After sixteen days, the United State provided Israel with sophisticated new weapons for use against Egyptian missile launchers. Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State, finally proposed a cease-fire. Sadat replied to Kissinger:

**Well, just as we embarked on a peace process, let us have a forces disengagement which would peacefully put an end to this counter-attack. You know I am a man of peace. If you had accepted the 1971 initiative, no war would have broken out at all. I care very much for human life, and am loathe to losing one soldier. But you did not take me seriously and this is the outcome. But I wanted my victory to be maintained because I regarded it as an avenue to the peace for which I had worked unceasingly (Quoted in [www.mincava.umn.edu/papers/Book/Anwar S.asp](http://www.mincava.umn.edu/papers/Book/Anwar S.asp)).**

Thus Arab nationalist challenges to Western interest and to Israel of Nasser were displaced by a stress on cooperation with the Western powers and on regional peace. Sadat insisted the attempts of the Arab rulers to ostracize Egypt were doomed because the Arab leaders had no practical alternative to Egypt's course and Egypt remain the heart of the Arab world. Egypt's role under Sadat was now to lead the Arabs to peace.

However, the October War healed the deep sense of humiliation felt by the Egyptian people and won Sadat tremendous popularity, enabling him to initiate major shifts of direction both domestically and on the regional and international fronts.

Fresh from a good military performance, Sadat also accumulated enough political legitimacy and acceptance to begin a programme of economic reforms. He pioneered this ideological transformation in the 'October Working Paper' of 1974, which he presented as his first programmatic statement. In this Paper, Sadat voiced his intention to build on Nasser's legacy in meeting the demands of the seventies: 'When we speak of new responsibilities in our lives after October, we should record that we are not starting from a void. We have a rich experience behind us': And the essential components of Nasser's vision were reaffirmed in the October Paper: the commitment to build a strong Egypt, the continuing task of confronting Israel, the call for Arab unity with Egypt as 'the heart of the Arab nation', and the insistence that Egypt play an important world role (UAR Ministry of Information, 1974:27).

Sadat, in building on the strength brought by the October War, promised to bring a new moderation to Egypt affairs. 'The burden of progress and construction', Sadat explained in the October Paper, 'must fall principally on the shoulders of the Egyptian people'. Yet, he realistically continued, 'we still have a great need for foreign resources'. Egypt's changed global and regional situation, Sadat added, 'would make it possible to obtain these resources in a way to strengthen our economy and speed up development. Hence the call for an outward-looking economic policy' (UAR Ministry of information, 1974:61).

Sadat's much trumpeted program of Economic Opening was to provide the foundations for Egypt's new progress. In the wake of October Paper the moderation of Sadat's strategy was to be the moderation of hope and not of despair.

The basic formula was impressive in its simplicity: Arab (as well as Western) capital would be wed to Western technology and lured to an emerging market economy in Egypt. That formula contained great promise: an inflow of foreign capital, improved access to advanced technology, a role for indigenous capital in an expanded private sector, and vast new employment possibilities for Egyptian labor. The implications of the 'opening' strategy for Egypt and its place in the world were far-reaching. In fact, Nasser had prepared the way. The origins of the policy can be traced to Nasser's economic retrenchment of the mid-sixties and his post-1967 moves (especially the acceptance of the Rogers Plan) to draw the United States back into the West Asian area. Sadat carried the logic of Nasser's strategy further when in 1971 he inaugurated discussion of an expanded liberalization of the Egyptian economy, which would eventually reintegrate Egypt into the Western world market.

The private sector's sphere of legitimate activities was greatly expanded by Sadat. In April 1975, law 111 abolished the General Organizations, and replaced them with weaker 'Sectoral Supreme Councils'. In addition, publicly – owned industries were allowed to issue new stocks to provide buyers under law 262. Law 111 gave worker's representatives in matters concerning partial privatization of public industries by making them members of the supreme sectoral councils. Sadat's policies gave the private sector the right to gradually expand its economic sphere. (Waterbury, 1978:297-299).

Thus the means of production were increasingly privatized and externalized, hence possibilities for generating and distributing patronage outside the ambit of presidential authority were multiplied. The tremendous upsurge in foreign investment and aid provided innumerable opportunities for comprador activities, some of which could be undertaken in conjunction with President Sadat and/or his clients, but others of which were up for grabs. The real political impact of Infitah (Economic liberalization or open door policy), which paid lip service to political liberties, was in fact to generate the capital base upon which independent political initiatives (usually by wealthy managers, entrepreneurs, and professionals, but also by the more humble) could be contemplated and carried through. A paternalistic network of patronage and control was elected alongside the state bureaucracy, much in the way Khedive Ismail, the most profligate of Egypt's nineteenth century rulers had done (Springborg, 1989:74-78).

In an attempt to continue strengthening the legitimacy of his regime, Sadat introduced and enacted several political reforms that had particular effect in regards to the common man's role in government. The Arab Socialist Union, the sole political party developed under the Nasser regime, controlled Egypt's political landscape, but was often charged with being the party of the elite and privileged. In an attempt to assuage popular pressure, in 1974 Sadat call for the reform of the union and the Egyptian political system. These reforms were geared to address various social forces in society as well as expanding the forum to new political parties ([www.mideastinfo.com/paper4.htm](http://www.mideastinfo.com/paper4.htm)). In 1975 Sadat permitted the establishment of three groupings in the Arab Socialist Union to express the opinions of the left, the right, and the center of the regime. By 1976 the three

platforms were permitted, within established guideline, to act as separate political entities, but each group needed to elect a minimum of twelve deputies to the people's Assembly to be recognized. The leftist group was originally known as the National Progressive Unionist Organization (NPUO) led by Khalid Muhi ad Din, a Free Officer and a Marxist. The right wing group was the Socialist Liberal Organization (SLO – later the Liberal or Ahrar Party) led by Mustafa Kamil Mural. The center group was known as the Egyptian Arab Socialist Organization. The country's main political forces, the Wafd, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Nasserites, and the communists, however were not allowed to represent ([www.memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+eg0052\)](http://www.memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+eg0052))).

In the October 1976 election, not unexpectedly, the pro-government center platform of the Arab Socialist Union won an overwhelming majority, 280 seats; the SLP won 12 and NPUO only 2. Independent candidates however could secure forty-eight seats in all. When he opened the new assembly<sup>44</sup> Sadat announced that the platforms would become political parties. Thus Sadat announced that he would establish his own party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), signaling the end of the Arab Socialist Union, which was emerged with the NDP.

The conception of the proper nature of Egyptian society faced a considerable change under Sadat. Socialism was denounced as a vehicle of envy and extremism; instead, Sadat promoted a traditional conception to which society was seen as an extension of patriarchal family and characterized by harmony

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44. On September 11, 1971, a new constitution was presented by Sadat and approved by the electorate. This constitution provides that the National Assembly is to replace by the People's Assembly.

among classes and belief in religion. He promoted himself as the 'believing president' and was constantly seen at prayer, seeking wide media-coverage while performing 'namaz' often finishing speeches with a Qur'anic quotation, naming the October war as 'the battle of Badr', declaring himself to be the 'Muslim President of an Islamic State' and justifying his actions and his duty as a Muslim leader. The use of religious symbols was aimed at the creation of his own 'separate identity' and to enhance his political legitimacy in the country. Thus, Islam was given a more prominent role to play during Sadat's regime what he called the 'State of Science and faith'. Sadat relaxed state control over the activities of organizations which were allowed to operate more freely than was the case during Nasser's era. The enhanced role of religion could be seen from the position accorded to Islam in the new constitution. While the Constitution of 1954 and the National Charter of 1962 could not go beyond the recognition of Islam as the state source of legislation (Art.2) which was further amended and underlined as 'the major source' when Art.2 was amended in 1980. Also Art.19 prescribed religious instruction in schools.<sup>45</sup>

Since al-Azhar was the most important institution connected with the religious life of Muslims in Egypt, Sadat appeared to have given considerable thought to using this institution, together with the Sufi orders of the country, as an instrument to promote his religious policy, about which he always appeared to have held, even though vaguely, that it should emerge from Egypt's popular social and cultural Fabrics. Sadat appointed Shaykh Abdel Halim Mahmoud, a Sufi

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45. For the details of these and other related articles of the 1980 constitution , See Appendix pp.186-194

theologian of considerable prestige in both Sufi circles and among theologians, Rector of al-Azhar (Shaykh al-Azhar). Shaykh Abdel Halim enjoyed popular support in rural areas also, on account of his subaltern Sufi connections. Under Shaykh Abdel Halim not only was the domain of administrative power of Shaykh al-Azhar expanded through new legislation – apparently in response to Shaykh Abdel Halim’s efforts to check government interference in the affairs of al-Azhar – but a large number of new Azharite institutions of all levels were established in the provinces, and al-Azhar was asked to participate in the formulation of religious courses for Egyptian universities. In the wake of the discovery of the Takfir group<sup>46</sup> in July 1977, when some quarters blamed the lack of religious education in Egypt for the rise of such deviant religious ideologies as represented by this group, the government was quick to ask al-Azhar to provide the lead. Prime Minister Mamdouh Salem – rather thoughtlessly – called for what he described as the role of al-Azhar to ‘do away with unbelief and imported thought’. He further broadened this role by asking the Azharites ‘to frustrate the attempts of ideological onslaught of Egypt and the Islamic world’ (Bari, 1995:83).

The appointment of Shaykh Mahmoud, however, was not just a coincidence but a well calculated move on Sadat’s part to secure the political and ideological support of the Saudi regime and the Islamic establishment to his open door economic policy. It was then claimed that the Egyptian ulama were again

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46. Jamaat al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah (the group that charges society with unbelief and advocates withdrawal from it). This group started in the early 1970s and in July 1977 the government charged it with the kidnapping of Shaykh Husayn al-Dhahabi (former Minister of Waqf) who was later found dead. The group’s confrontation with the government forces led to the killing of a number of security officers and more than 400 arrests of men and women belonging to the organization were made. Some were charged with the kidnapping and executed on 19 March 1976 while others were given long prison sentences (Hussain, 1983:14).



endeavouring to take a more active role in keeping the country on the 'right path'.

In fact, there was tremendous growth in the activities of 'official Islam' during Sadat era. A new campus of Al-Azhar University was built in Nasser City whose budget, it is claimed, was underwritten by the Saudi Government (Contori, 1982:82). The state supported mosques more than doubled their number of religious education institutions and their student intake more than tripled. Publications issued by Al-Azhar, and the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (SCIA), which affirmed the officially approved version of Islam also increased four-fold. The number of radio and television hours of religious programmes quadrupled during this period (Ibrahim, 1988:637). This increase in the role of Al-Azhar and other Islamic institutions of 'official Islam' was aimed initially at curtailing the power and influence of Nasserists and communist opposition to the regime.

Moreover, Sadat decided to free the Muslim Brothers as part of a plan to utilize Islam for legitimizing his campaign of 'de-Nasserization' (Munson, 1988:78). In fact Sadat had purged major pro-Nasser power blocks from the government sector, but Nasserists and Marxists however continued to oppose Sadat's policies. As a result, Sadat thought that by encouraging the Brotherhood would be an effective way to offset his leftist opposition. The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, with their bitter memories of Nasser and his clique were ideal partners in Sadat's search for mass support in universities, industry and the over-populated urban areas. The process of releasing the Muslim Brothers said to have been completed by March 1975. Each released batch of the Muslim Brotherhood was given wide media publicity including their torture in the

jail in order to project the brutal and negative face of Nasserite state (Bari, 1995:71).<sup>47</sup> With the political support of Sadat's regime and the financial backing of the Saudi government,<sup>48</sup> the Brotherhood under the charismatic Supreme Guide, Omar Telmisani, soon re-emerged as a powerful political force in the mid 1970s. Sadat allowed the pro-Brotherhood students to group under the vague banner of Jama'at al al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Association) which swept the student's union election in most of the Egyptian Universities in 1977 and 1978. An important reason for the victory of Jamaa'at was the suppression of communists, Marxists and Nasserists on the campus (Waterbury, 1983:217). Sadat also allowed comparative freedom of action to the Muslim Brotherhood. Although, they were not allowed to become a legal organization, but they were allowed to operate openly and to publish their magazine, Al-Awd (The Return) as long as they did not criticize the regime too sharply.

In return for these political favours, the Brotherhood initially cooperated with the government. Not only did the Brotherhood oppose the anti-regime violence of the militant Islamic groups but also provided Islamic

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47. The repressive side of Nasser's regime has now been acknowledged by even so loyal a Nasserite as M.H.Haikal, the journalist who was Nasser's closet confidant. Over the years reported on the brutality of Egypt's police and military intelligence networks had come from their victims in a steady stream. Outside observers, notably Amnesty International, called the world's attention to the fact that under Nasser 'the maltreatment and torture of political prisoners was said to have been almost a matter of routine'. Especially after the revolution began to lose momentum in the sixties, the numbers of political prisoners and detainees mounted sharply, with estimates ranging as high as twenty thousand. Political opponents received harsh treatment in Nasser's Egypt: a number of leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were hanged, and communist militants beaten and tortured to death. After Nasser's death the veils were partially lifted: Nasser's Egypt, while far from a totalitarian state, was revealed as a repressive, authoritarian country (Baker, 1970:151).

48. Following Nasser's crackdown on the organization in 1950s and 1960s the regime in Riyadh had provided refuge and financial assistance to them. Daniel Pipes has claimed that the Saudi gave Muslim Brothers \$100,000 in early 1979, ostensibly for building mosques (Pipes, 1982:48).

justification for the regime's denunciation of pan-Arabism and socialism. The Brotherhood claimed that history textbooks taught in Egyptian, Syrian and other Arab schools were in fact a war against Islam.<sup>49</sup>

Apart from using religious symbolism, Sadat also sought to root legitimacy on constitutionalism and democracy. 'Egypt had moved', as Sadat declared, 'to a state of laws and institutions rather than to one of the people'. With this objective, Sadat launched his new programme with what he described as the '15<sup>th</sup> May Corrective Operation'. In a televised address to the nation, he stressed the need to draft the permanent constitution of the Republic, and invited public debate on the matter. Making his own suggestions, which he claimed he was doing as an ordinary citizen, he wanted the constitution to stipulate what he described as 'the dependable bond between collective freedom and political freedom'. Apparently with a view to satisfy his still existing socialist support base, particularly inside the establishment, he emphasized that the new constitution should make 'the socialist legitimacy the basis of all relationship in society', and called for the protection of public and cooperative sectors. The foundation of the constitution, however, had to be the Egyptian ethos and tradition. He said: 'we should turn to the village which is our root', ... 'We have our tradition built up over thousand of years, and we have first and foremost our mission of faith' (Quoted in Bari, 1995:80-81).

The ensuing public debate over the proposed constitution eventually turned into a debate on the place of religion in Egyptian polity. The Rector of al-

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49. Arabism had replaced Islam in these textbooks, while the pre-Islamic jahiliyya was being extolled because of its Arabism, despite its barbaric and anti-Muslim nature (Sivan, 1979:39-40).

Azhar, speaking on behalf of all the ulama and personnel of the institute demanded a clear statement in the constitution to the effect that Islam was the state religion. This demand was reiterated by many others, not necessarily Muslim leaders, and even received the full backing of the Coptic clergy. Indeed, of the nearly 7,000 proposals from the public regarding the new constitution, which poured into the headquarters of the preparatory committee, a substantial portion dealt with Islam in the new constitution. Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali, the ideologue of the Brotherhood and the then Director General of Islamic preaching (da'wa) in the Ministry of Awqaf, favoured complete Islamisation of the constitution. Some others favoured a modern secular constitution and suggested the application of modern method of research and criticism to the sources of Islamic jurisprudence (Figh) (O'Kane, 1972:137-148).

In the final outcome, however, the new constitution adopted Islam as religion of the state. Part1, Article2 of the new constitution read: ...Islam is the religion of the state, Arabic is its official language and the principles of the Islamic Shari'a are a major source of legislation. This was not the end of the controversy. Firstly, because the principles of the Shari'a rather than the Shari'a itself were stated to be a source of legislation and not the major source. Lastly, by stating in Article3 that the people were the sole source of authority, the constitution in fact left ample scope for secular legislation. Hence, it is hardly surprising that the battle for the application of the Shari'a (tatbiq al-Shari'a) continued throughout the 1970s with the Islamists in the lead.

The Muslim Brethren though mild, their approach towards the government continued to put pressures on the government in order to achieve more

prominence for Islamic principles both in the constitution and the legislative process. In line with Saudi Arabian practices, the Brethren demanded the implementation of the penalties (hudud), prescribed by Islamic law (Shari'a), for offenses such as assault, theft, consumption of alcoholic beverages, adultery, slander and apostasy. They believed that a prompt and strict implementation of these penalties on all Egyptians, regardless of religion, would have an immediate positive impact and would reverse the social and moral degradation from which Egypt had been suffering as a result of the Western-Christian invasion. As early as June 1977 al-Da'wa<sup>50</sup> called upon Sadat to adopt an Islamic order, in order to combat communist-leftist atheism (Altman, 1979:87-94). Indeed, from the time of their reappearance in 1976, al-Da'wa and al-I'tisam the two major publication of Brotherhood openly stated their criticism of all the government's shortcomings.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the considerable tension between the Islamic establishment and the regime over the issue of implementation of the Shari'a, Sadat continued to use Islamic symbolism. In the realm of foreign policy, Islam served as a ready made instrument to justify Egypt's alignment with the U.S.A. and the conservative Muslim States (i.e. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco etc.) against the then communist Russia. Sadat employed Islam against the Soviet backed Ethiopians, denouncing their fighting the Eritrea and the Ogaden desert and propagated the

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50. Al-Da'wa under its editor Umar al-Tilmisani, was allowed to renew publication in June 1976 after 22 years of suppression. It became an unofficial propagator of the Brethren's views and challenged many of the regime's internal and external policies. It would therefore seem to be justified to rely primarily on al-Da'wa in attempting to assess the political and ideological orientations of the Muslim Brethren as they emerged throughout the 1970s.

51. Although al-I'tisam was officially published by the Shari'a Society (rather than the Muslim Brotherhood) and was initially concerned with theological matters, it gradually adopted a more political stance – mirroring al-Da'wa's position and using many of the same writers (Ibrahim, 1982:181).

Afghanistan crisis as an 'Islamic-Soviet conflict' ( Waterbury, 1985:209; Dessouki, 1983:91). He said that 'Egypt would play a focal role by providing the U.S. with military facilities to defend all Arab and Islamic states as far as Indonesia from the communist threat of the Soviet Union' (Alam, 1998:98).

In fact, Sadat's long distrustful of the Soviet Union and faced with an ailing economy and an inconclusive struggle with Israel, sought relief through a realignment of his country's foreign policy, away from Nasser's emphasis on anti-imperialism and Arab nationalism and towards the United States in Particular. Egypt's close ties with the Soviet Union were reduced in order to accommodate the establishment of close ties with the West, (particularly the United States). Furthermore, Egypt abandoned its commitment to unified Arab struggle against Israel and sought instead a separate peace under the auspices of the United States.

The first stage of this – Egypt's move away from the Soviet Union was welcomed by Islamic movements, who opposed friendly relations with the USSR on religious grounds. Sadat's 'peace initiative' – beginning with his 1977 trip to Jerusalem and culminating in the 1979 Camp David agreements – however met with strong disapproval by Islamic movements (and much of the Arab world) which left the holy city of Jerusalem unliberated and in their views benefited only to Zionist Israel. This view gained even more currency after 1979, when it became apparent that Israel was unwilling to return occupied territories other than the Sinai. Sadat's willingness to perform the role of staunch US ally in the region – a willingness demonstrated by military aid and co-operation – further aggravated dissatisfaction with the direction of Egypt's foreign policy (Ismael & Ismael, 1985:109).

The Peace Treaty with Israel ended the Brotherhood's voluntary cooperation with the government. Disenchanted with the government's non-implementation of Shari'a, but more specifically, the government's refusal to allow them to form a political party, the Brotherhood came into increasingly open confrontation with Sadat regime in the post-Camp David period. 'Omar al-Telmisani, the Supreme Guide and editor of al-Da'wa denounced the agreement as it did not explicitly compel Israel to withdraw from Jerusalem as according to Islamic law, 'it is a sin to leave any Muslim land in the hands of usurpers' (Waterbury, 1983:221). Al-Da'wa, openly accused Sadat of collaborating with the United States and Israel against all Muslim movements including first and foremost the Brotherhood itself, and alleged that Sadat had decided to implement a secret report, prepared by Dr. Richard Mitchell of C.I.A., which aimed at liquidation of leaders of the Muslim movement. The government vehemently denied the allegation, ordered the closure of al-Da'wa and accused the Muslim Brotherhood of creating 'a state within a state' (Kepel, 1985:118).

Even the docile Azharite establishment also tried to assert its independence and criticized some of the policies of Sadat's regime in the aftermath of Camp David Treaty. It is important to note that the Fatwa ratifying the Camp David Treaty was issued eighteen months after the conclusion of the treaty. It was at the same time that the Shaykh Al-Azhar, Abdel Hamid Mahmud, vehemently opposed the government's measures relating to family planning and amendments in Muslim personal law. He also indirectly indicted the government for its failure to implement the Shari'a.

On the domestic front criticism was growing against the failure of Sadat's open door economic policy. His failing, however, was that he was indiscreet not only in his style of functioning but also in policy content. To the critics of the policy the infitah represented a liberalization that was speculative, mercantile open door policy rather than being production oriented. The major beneficiaries of this policy were those who imported foreign goods and acted as middlemen between foreign firms and government; many had direct links to public sector officials and political elite. They also profited from "feeding the seemingly insatiable middle and lower middle class demand for imported consumer goods" (Waterbury, 1983:172-175).

The cultural consequences of Infitah caused immediate alarm to a large section of the Politically active and culturally conscious public. According to Hinnebusch:

**modernization is a function not just of capital and technology, but of motivation, which appears rooted in a sense of self-worth and confidence inseparable from strong religious, ideological and national identity. Infitah appears to have challenged this sense of self-worth among a considerable section of Egyptians, because of its dependency and consumerism, overlooking long-term national economic interest (Hinnebusch, 1985:285).**

During 1975 and 1976, Egypt found itself under pressure from Arab and Western creditors to further improve the attractiveness of its economy to foreign capital by curtailing government spending and devaluing the Egyptian pound. When the Egyptian government eventually agreed to some such measures in January 1977 and reduced subsidies on over two dozen essential commodities (including rice, sugar, gasoline and cooking fuel), major riots erupted throughout



Egypt, in which seventy people died and over 1,200 were arrested (Desouki, 1984:125-126).

A final feature of *infitah* was the drain on Egyptian labour to the Arab oil producing states. By 1978 it was estimated that over 1.3 million Egyptians were working outside the country. Furthermore, Egypt had become increasingly dependent on the remittances from this migrant labour force.

When the bulk of the Egyptian population saw few, if any, of the benefits of Sadat's economic policy, a privileged minority profited tremendously from *infitah*. There was a dramatic growth in the wealthy strata of Egyptian society – from 500 millionaires in 1975 to a reported 17,000 in 1981 (Heikal, 1983:185). This conspicuously wealthy and powerful Egyptian bourgeoisie, enriched by the proceeds of increased economic contact with the West, emerged a new force in Egyptian politics. With their growth, the level and extent of corruption apparent in Egyptian society also expanded. This contrasted sharply with the pauperization of the urban middle classes, particularly public sector employees, who found their standard of living eroded by inflation and who were rendered increasingly dependent upon government subsidies. It also contrasted with the vassalization of the peasant population as agricultural land distribution and production were deregulated. Furthermore, *infitah* brought with it an inrush of Western ideas and materialism which threatened to swamp the traditional values of the (Muslim) Egyptian masses. The Muslim Brotherhood described Sadat's policy of *infitah* as the policy of consumerism and opposed it specifically on moral and religious grounds. It pointed out that in order to popularize their produce, foreign companies were trying to change public thinking and their culture, which

sometimes contrasted with the teachings of their religion. Some Islamicists suggested that while economic openness in itself was not wrong, it developed problems from the outset because Islamic values were ignored in its implementation (Bari, 1995:95). It was in response to such alienation, and in defence of traditional values, that a significant number of (primarily young and middle-class) Egyptian Muslims turned to neo-activist Islam.

Thus, the stage of Sadat policies were set for the growth of political activism among Islamic groups in Egypt. It was therefore only natural that an Islamic critique of the status quo would emerge and win support in Egypt.

The substance of this neo-activist Islamic critique owed much to the Muslim Brotherhood. Although the contemporary Muslim Brotherhood as was criticized by Egyptian Islamic militants for its gradualist tactics (i.e. its rejection of violent confrontation and its willingness to seek partial compromise with the regime in the 1970s in exchange for quasi-legality), its analysis of Egyptian society was generally accepted. Indeed, two years of interviews with jailed militants led Egyptian sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim to conclude:

**In terms of the religious component of their ideology, their reading of history, and their overall for the future, members of (Egypt's Islamic groups) expressed no differences with the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, they considered themselves as natural continuation of the Brotherhood, which was banned and persecuted by both the Royalist regime before 1952 and by Nasser's regime after 1952. (The activist groups) revere the founder of the Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna, and the pioneers who gave their lives as martyrs for Islam (Ibrahim, 1980:434).**

It is a fact indeed that despite its eventual conflict with Sadat, the Brotherhood of the seventies was never a revolutionary movement. Many of its

most prominent supporters were wealthy businessmen and professionals who did not want an Islamic revolution. The Brotherhood magazines tended to stress the need for a strictly Islamic legal system and for the elimination of immorality in the mass media. They did not advocate the radical transformation of the social and political structures of Egypt or the use of violence to achieve their goals (Munson, 1988:79). As a result, a number of underground neo-activist Islamic groups arose within Egypt.<sup>52</sup> Some of these, such as the group known as Jund Allah (the soldiers of God), had only a small membership and made little significant impact on Egyptian politics and society. Others, notably Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami (The Islamic Liberation Organization), Jama'at al-Muslimin (the Group of Muslims) and al-Jihad (Holy struggle) did represent a significant force within the country. It may be useful at this point to consider in some detail of certain features of these secretive underground Islamic groups. Most of them have had philosophical or organizational roots that at some point or other grew away from the older Islamic societies in their criticism of the regime, especially the Muslim Brotherhood.

### **The Group of Muslim (Jama'at al-Muslimin)**

It is believed by some that the early beginnings of the newer offshoot from the older Islamic groups date back to around 1965, when young members of the

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52. The authorities estimate that there may be up to twenty such organizations, with fluid and interchangeable membership, including about half a dozen that are particularly significant.

Muslim Brothers, arrested that year in a conspiracy against President Nasser's government, were cruelly tortured; this provoked a mutiny in the detention camp in May 1967 which in turn led to the younger and more rebellious elements being isolated in special confined quarters. Presented thus with the opportunity for intensive discussion of religious and political matters, they started from the proposition that rulers who tortured people just because the latter believed sincerely in their own religion could not themselves be real Muslims even if they were nominally so. From this, there emerged the basic concept of 'Takfir' – meaning to judge somebody as being infidel or 'excommunication' (Ayubi, 1991:76-77).

It was in these circumstances that the group, named by government agencies as al-Takfir wa'l-Hijra (Ex-communication and Holy Flight), but which called itself Jama'at al-Muslimin (the Group of Muslims), came into existence.<sup>53</sup>

Shukri Mustafa, its leader, was a student of agriculture science. He was a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood and had been arrested while distributing anti government pamphlets in 1965. He remained in prison for six years, before being released in 1971 following the take-over by Sadat. He had witnessed in prison some of the most brutal torture perpetrated on members of the Brotherhood. This led him to reject the political and organizational tactics of the Muslim Brotherhood (though not its ideology), and to begin the organization of his own militant Islamic group. The first members of the Group of Muslims were recruited while Mustafa

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53. Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah ('Excommunication and Holy Flight') is a name assigned to the group by the Egyptian media and authorities. The title refers to the organization's accusation of godlessness (al-Takfir) against Egyptian society, and its call for a separation from that society akin to the Prophet's flight from Mecca (al-Hijrah).

was still in prison. He had also steeped himself in the literature of Sayyid Qutb and Maudoudi and got involved in debates in the prison with the elders over ideological issues emanating from the writing of Qutb (Bari, 1995:69).<sup>54</sup>

Following his release, Mustafa set about expanding his organization. He moved to Asyut (a provincial capital in Upper Egypt), and recruited members in that area; later, he moved to Cairo. Kinship and friendship represented the primary recruitment mechanisms utilized by the Group. Those recruited were usually young (median age 24) students for recent graduates (professionals), and from middle or lower middle-class (often rural) backgrounds. The bulk of the group's members were from Upper Egypt, primarily because of Mustafa's initial residence was in Asyut. Although the vast majority of the group's members were male, some women were recruited (normally through kinship ties) (Ibrahim, 1980:437-439).

It would appear that al-Takfir wal-Hijra has borrowed heavily from the Brotherhood: organized on hierarchical lines in cells, each headed by an 'Amir al-Mu'minin' (Commander of the Faithful, the traditional title of the head of the Islamic community) (Aly and Wenner, 1982:333). The organization utilized a 'dedicated cadre' of followers – that is the Group demanded full-time activism and total obedience, thus creating a situation wherein members were heavily dependent upon it. Deviation from duty or group doctrine could lead to expulsion, physical, and even assassination.<sup>55</sup>

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54. For Sayyid Qutb's thought and writing. See Appendix pp.193-202.

55. In fact, it was the Muslim Group's punishment of deviant members in 1976-1977 that alerted the Egyptian authorities to its activities.

✓ Mustafa wrote a 206-page book, kitab al-Khilafa (the book of the Caliphate) in which he outlined his thinking, based primarily on the works of Sayyid Qutb, especially Ma'alim, with some extremist additions. This philosophy had two main axes: ideology and haraki (action). ✓

The principles of Mustafa's ideology are as follows:

1. The approach of Islam – Islam has become alienated. Existing societies will fall. Islam will undergo a renaissance brought about by an elite which believes in leaping from the hills of Yemen brandishing the sword, based on the Hadith, 'Stories from the End of Days'.

2. The hijra – The need to abandon existing society in order to begin forming the nucleus of the hoped – for Islamic society through hijra to the mountains and the caves.

3. The concept of stopping and studying – Refusing to accept that simply by fulfilling the five elements of Islam a person may become a complete Muslim. This is an obligation to distance oneself from acts forbidden by commandment, otherwise every Muslim will be considered an infidel.

4. The only sources for the laws and the commandments are the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The principles of the action are:

1. Creating the organizational structure of the group, the election of Shukri Mustafa as Amir (head of the faithful). Therefore amirs were chosen for each region under Mustafa, the chief amir.
2. Rental of flats to be used as the local underground headquarters in Cairo, Alexandria, and other districts.

3. Migration of the group to the caves and clefts of the mountain region in order to implement the ideology.
4. Recruitment of as many military men as possible for use in operations and for training members of the organization to use weapons. These military men were to seize the weapons in their military units (Sagiv, 1995:47-48).

The group of Muslims made no distinction between state and society. The two were felt to be closely interrelated, and both were seen as godless and corrupt. Parallels were drawn between contemporary Egypt and the ignorance and paganism (Jahiliyah) of pre-Islamic Arabia. Because of this, the group eschewed as a goal the immediate seizure of state power, viewing their task instead as a long-term one. Following the example set by the Prophet Muhammad in his flight from Mecca to Medina and his subsequent conquest of Arabia, the group sought to establish an insulated community of believers. This would then form the base from which the re-Islamification of Egyptian society could take place. The group's manifesto, *al-khalafah*, categorized the group's mission into three stages, beginning with communications (balagh); followed by organization, emergence (tabaw'), and migration ; and culminating in holy war and its strategy (Ismael & Ismael, 1985:117).

The group claimed that both the Sadat's regime and all of society were pagan, therefore the true Muslim must separate from them. They also included in this condemnation all four traditional schools of Islam (Madzhabs) and all traditional commentators. It labeled these schools as puppets of rulers who used them to monopolize Qur'anic interpretation to their own advantage.

Another characteristic of Takfir was their strong antagonism to Christians and Jews. Instead of seeing Jews and Christians as protected communities (dhimmis) and “People of the Book”, Al-Takfir viewed them as infidels both because they had deliberately rejected the truth and because of their connections to colonialism and Zionism (Esposito, 1988:171). Takfir also stressed an international Jewish conspiracy in Sadat and the need to fight it.

Takfir believed that the world was nearing its end and Mustafa, Takfir’s leader, was the Mahdi (Messianic). Among proofs of the world’s coming end was the prevalent state of disbelief, oppression, immorality, famine, wars, earthquakes, and tycoons (Hopwood, 1991:118). Mustafa would be the Caliph who would found a new Muslim community, conquer the world, and usher in God’s final reign on earth.

However the group suffered serious arrest in May 1975, August and November 1976, and in January 1977. Members of the group subsequently claimed that it was such government suppression (more specifically, the detention without trial of several group members) that provoked it to take precipitate action against the regime in July 1977 (Ibrahim, 1980:442-443). Other claim that the group’s violent acts were designed to show their strength vis-a-vis other militant Islamic organizations.

Whatever the reason, on 3 July 1977 the group’s members kidnapped former Egyptian Minister of Waqfs (Islamic endowments) Shaykh Muhammad al-Dahabi, a noted Islamic scholar and strong opponent of religious extremism. A ransom of £F 200,000, the release of sixty prisoners, and an aircraft were demanded for al-Dahabi’s release. The demands were not met, and three days



later Shaykh al-Dahabi's body was found in a deserted apartment in al-Haram district. A series of bombings were carried out over the next few days by the group. Intensive action by the Egyptian security forces, however, soon led to the arrest of Mustafa and 400 other members. Of these, 198 were tried in court, with 36 eventually being found guilty. Five group leaders, including Shukri Mustafa, were ultimately executed for their activities (Arab report and Record, 1-15 July 1977:531-532).<sup>56</sup>

### **The Islamic Liberation Organization (Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami)**

The Islamic Liberation Organization – also known as Shabab Muhammad (Muhammad's youths)<sup>57</sup> – was formed by Dr. Salih Siriyya, a Palestinian – born Iraqi citizen with a doctorate in Science Education. Siriyya was a former member of the Islamic Liberation party in Jordan. After 1967 he joined a number of Palestinian organizations, and attempted to co-operate with Iraq, Libya and other 'revolutionary' Arab regimes. In 1971 he moved to Cairo, and accepted a job with an Arab League agency (Ibrahim, 1980:435-436).

• In Cairo, Siriyya tried to make contact with the former leaders of the

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56. Following the arrest and executed of Group members in July 1977, a threat to bomb the Egyptian Embassy was reported in Kuwait.

57. This group is also known as the 'Technical Military Academy group' (Jam'at al-Fanniyya al-Askariyya); a name given to them by the Arab media following the group's attack on Cairo's Technical Military Academy in April 1974.

Muslim Brothers in Egypt, but he was rejected by them.<sup>58</sup> He decided to form his own organization, and in 1973 he began to recruit members from among his students at 'Ayn Shams University, as well as students in Alexandria and other universities (Sagive, 1995:50-51). He also approached to, young devout, worshippers at local mosques, represented the primary mechanisms of recruitment used. The proliferation of independent (Ahali) mosques, free from government control, facilitated this recruitment.<sup>59</sup> Members of the Islamic Liberation Organization were primarily young (medium age 22) students or recent graduates (professionals), from lower or lower middle-class (often rural) backgrounds. Most resided in Cairo, Alexandria and the Delta (Ibrahim, 1980:438-439). Women were not recruited.

Decision-Making within the Islamic Liberation Organization was largely consensual, based on a twelve – member committee chaired by Dr. Siriyya. He was revered by Islamic Liberation Organization members and his advice was usually accepted during policy deliberations. The notable exception to this was the group's decision in 1974 to attack the Technical Military Academy and carry out a coup against President Sadat; although Dr. Siriyya gave the scheme only a 30 percent chance of success, it was adopted and attempted on 18 April 1974. On

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58. Hamuda relates that Siriyya met with al-Hudaibi, with Shaikh Muhammad al-Ghazali, with Zainab al-Ghazali (who was closely connected with Sayyid Qutb and was one of the few women in the movement of Muslim Brothers), and with others. They refused Siriyyah as a member of the Brotherhood because of his abortive attempt to take over the building of the Technical College near Cairo. Zainab al-Ghazali wrote 'Zainab al-Ghazali would not agree to meet with a person known to her to be against Anwar al-Sadat. I declare that Anwar al-Sadat is a believer and the son of a believer, and I know his father and his piety (Sagive, 1995:50,61).

59. An estimated 20,000 Ahali mosques may have existed in Egypt in 1970, growing to over 40,000 by 1970. In contrast, only 6,000 mosques (1980) were controlled by the Egyptian Ministry of Waqfs (Islamic endowments) (Ansari, 1984:125-126).

that date however the group, despite extensive planning and practice, failed to achieve its objectives and was subsequently broken up by the Egyptian security forces.

‘ The ideology of the Islamic Liberation Organization was heavily influenced by the writings of Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, as well as those of Abu al-A’la al-Mawdoudi and Ali Shariati. That ideology had five core aspects:

1. That Islam provides the only proper and required path to righteous life, and that man was created to follow this path. Since the way of Islam is exclusive, other religious are godless. In this view of the world the Islamic Liberation Organization, like many other militant Islamic groups, are significantly less tolerant of Judaism and Christianity (the ‘people of the book’) than is contemporary mainstream Islam.

2. Righteousness must exist on both an individual and collective level. For the latter to occur, society must be governed by the Shari’a.

3. The failure of existing ‘Islamic’ societies (such as Egypt) to genuinely and totally adopt the Shari’a as their legal – political basis has led to their weakness in the face of external enemies, notably the Christian West, Jewish Zionism and atheistic communism.

4. The establishment ulama are condemned as propagandists, who prop up an immoral social-political order, corrupting Islam in the process

5. The Islamic Liberation Organization, like similar groups, see themselves engaged in takfir (an accusation of godlessness) against the extant political and social structure and in a jihad (holy struggle) for the re-Islamification

of society. Dedication to this cause is reinforced by the acceptance of the concept of martyrdom, with paradise awaiting those who fall in the struggle against godlessness (Ismael & Ismael, 1985:114-115).

Thus, the Islamic Liberation Organization advocated the reorganization of Egyptian society on the basis of the Shari'a, and the rejection of imported, non-Islamic institutions and ideas. Because the Islamic Liberation Organization differentiated between Egyptian state and society – the former godless and corrupt, the later victimized by the political system – the group advocated transformation from above. In this way it worked towards the seizure of state power, with the aim of establishing an Islamic political system through which the re-Islamification of society could take place

It was in pursuit of this revolutionary aim that, in 1974, their action began. Members of Siriyya's organization grappled with those who resisted them at the college. The point of occupying the college was to seize the weapons there and to use them to gain control of key government facilities in Cairo and Alexandria, to capture or kill the President, take power, and declare the establishment of an Islamic state. They, however, might have succeeded, at the last minute balked at the enormity of the deed, informed the authorities. Siriyya, confident of initial success, had prepared bayam raqm wahid (proclamation number one) to be broadcast over radio and television from the hall of the Coordinating Committee of the ruling party in Alexandria, where President Sadat and top government officials were gathered to address a student conference. Siriyya was planning to announce a curfew and his own appointment as Amir of

Egypt. The contents of 'proclamation number one' give a clear objectives of the organization:

**On this day, we have been successful, praise God, in taking power and arresting all those responsible for the previous regime and we are about to embark upon a new era. We shall not lavish promises, however, we declare that the new government shall be founded upon the following principles:**

- 1. The principles of state shall rest upon new foundations which are not ambiguous of self-contradictory.**
- 2. The revolution shall not be limited to political or military directions. It shall include all parts of economic, cultural, and social life and others.**
- 3. The state shall be concerned in particular with faith, morality, and virtue.**
- 4. In its political activities, the state shall be concerned first and foremost with the interest of the nation, and thereafter with covenants and agreements.**
- 5. The state shall work to liberate all territories stolen from the homeland and to assist the downtrodden and the exploited in each and every place, and shall oppose imperialism in all forms in the world.**
- 6. The state shall apply all its power to bringing about unity, without regard to verbal attacks, and shall apply all its might to fostering development for raising the standard of living of the residents.**
- 7. Society shall be free to say whatever it wishes and to criticize the systems of state, with the exception of lies, falsehoods, and libelous statements.**
- 8. We shall rewrite all the principles (and replace) individuals and positions**
- 9. The state shall defend all the principles of justice known to everyone as part of our heritage**

**And success in from Allah  
Signed: President of the Islamic Republic  
(Quoted in Sagive, 1995:51-52)**

Although the Technical Military Academy was successfully attacked, the second stage of the operation was never reached, in the face of government counter-measures. After the members of the organization were arrested, they were

tried, Siriyya and the commander of the action at the Military College were both condemned to death and executed.

Amidst this threat of growing clandestine Islamic extremism in the 1970s, both the state machinery and the Brotherhood found a commonality of interests in curbing the trend. The militant groups were posing a challenge to the credibility of the Brotherhood, advocating ideologies in the name of political revival of Islam, which the Brotherhood had espoused through their mild stand towards the government. The mainstream Brotherhood however was being criticized by both the pro-establishment forces, who tried to expose its past record of violence, and the hard-line Islamicists who were unhappy over its soft-pedaling the government stand. Some pro-establishment elements on the other hand reminded the Brotherhood of its involvement in violent activities in the past, particularly the shooting at Nasser by an activist of the Brotherhood in Alexandria in 1954.

Umar al-Tilmisani, the General Guide of the organization in late 1977, refuted this allegation in an editorial in al-Da'wa. The day would come, he said, when it would be established beyond doubt who really engineered the incident. Tilmisani was, however, more concerned with answering the accusation of the hard-line Islamicists about the Brotherhood's collaboration with the ruling establishment of the country, ignoring 'his mistakes and misdeeds'. He reminded his accusers that his organization was not concerned with individual rulers. The Brotherhood had criticized Nasser on principle even though it had to pay heavy price for it, and 'We deal with the present ruler (Sadat) in the same spirit'. He pointed to the Brotherhood's criticism of the government on its policy of restricted

freedom and its law of parties, which he described as unconstitutional, and the government's failure to implement the Shari'a. 'We told the present ruler that we did not want a government which is Islamic only in appearance; we wanted a government which was established on Islamic principles', he revealed. He evaded the issue of his organization's rapprochement with Sadat, but defended Shukri's group against the treatment meted out to it by the government and the press. He conveyed to those 'who blamed us on our noble stand', that the Brotherhood 'neither wanted to invite trouble nor instigated dissension'. This was the dividing line between the Brotherhood and the extremists. All the same, he reminded the extremists, the Brotherhood also was not recognized in law (Bari, 1995:75-76).

In its approach to the militants, the Brotherhood took a persuasive tone. Hudaybi, another active member of Brotherhood, himself wrote a monograph under the suggestive title "Du'at la Qudat" (Preachers, not Judges), to point out that Islam did not allow excommunication, whether of an individual or a society, as long as they pronounced the kalima al-shahada (acknowledging that there is no divinity but that of Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger) (Ansari, 1984:38-41).

Seeking to moderate extremist tendencies, al-Da'wa started a new column on this aspect, headlined 'Fiqh al-Da'wa' ("understanding of the call of Islam and its preaching"). Its refrain in these columns was that forbearance with steadfastness was the prophetic way in the preaching of Islam. While working for Islam one needed to have a broader perspective, and do this job calmly. 'Experiences and trials have shown us that undue enthusiasm is not a proof of the

strength of a person's faith; most of the time it only shows the lack of forbearance" (Quoted in Bari, 1995:121).

The Brotherhood, however, did not hide its displeasure over the government's treatment of the problem. Writing in its organ *al-Da'wa*, Muhammad Abdel Quddous, one of its prominent members, suggested that the 'youth of the groups were not criminal by nature, and they could not be cured by harsh treatment; they could rather be cured through objective debate and calm and scientific discussions'. 'This youth was clean and honest, but had lost the way'. The first mistake of not only the press but also the State was pushing the youth to the road of destruction instead of trying to attempt to reform them (Quoted in Bari, 1995:76-77). In the eyes of the masses and many intellectuals, Sadat policies were depicted as a jumbled confusion: socialism, liberalism, religious faith, economic *laissez faire* which benefited a few, while the masses sank into a morass of inflation and, poverty, oppression of liberals charged with left-wing views, subsequent repression of religious elements after exploiting them against liberals and scorn for the clergy (Sagive, 1995:60).<sup>60</sup>

If Nasser's regime was repressive of the Islamicists, Sadat's rule also lacked political participation. His government failed to check this politico-religious extremism mainly due to wrong diagnosis. Thus amazingly, while extremism remained on the ascent throughout the 1970s, the government controlled media generally pointed accusing fingers in wrong directions: some blamed disturbed family life; others the poor educational standards both at school

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60. Sadat publicly mocked the important clergyman Shaikh al-Malawi whom he imprisoned with the words, 'He's been thrown into prison like a dog'. He also publicly scorned the Islamic dress of religious women. Both these incidents evoked great anger among both religious and non religious in Egypt.



and university levels; yet another section blamed al-Azhar and other religious establishments for their failure to provide suitable religious instruction and to create the right kind of understanding of Islam among the youth. Most asserted that the extremists were very few and that the phenomenon was mainly due to religious or cultural vacuum. Very few tried to find out the roots of the problem in Egypt's social and political life itself. Hardly anyone in Egypt talked about the lack of political freedom and the absence of democratic participation as a major cause of violent tendency among a certain group of youth. This intensely sensitive youth would have been deeply disturbed over the amazing gap between their personal abilities and their educational and professional achievements on the one hand, and their share of wealth and authority in their society on the other. Since they remained at the margin of society their frustrating helplessness and lack of meaningful participation in a fast changing social and economic scenario, with no political outlet to freely express themselves, would have led them to resort to extremism and violence.

Nevertheless at the same time, it is also important to recognize that many significant and varied ties exist between the Islamic militants on the one hand, and the quasi-legal Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jama'at on the other. While their prescriptions may have differed considerably, all of these groups advanced a broadly similar analysis and critique of Egyptian government and society. There was also some evidence that the government crackdown against opposition groups immediately before and after Sadat's assassination served to reinforce the ties

between the Muslim Brotherhood and underground Islamic forces in Egypt.<sup>61</sup>

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61. Evidence of such a reconciliation was provided by the participation of militant leaders in the 1983 funeral of prominent Muslim Brothers' member, Salih 'Ashmawi.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Religious Resurgence and Politics in Modern Egypt under Mubarak**

The development and evolution of Islamic political thought is a product of the assumption of spiritual and temporal unity. In its normative orientation, it is a search for that unity through the political sphere; and in its analytic orientation, a search for understanding of the failure of political institutions to realize that unity. Contemporary Islamic political activism emanates directly from this dialectic. The two interrelated themes running through Islamic political thought - political legitimacy and political accountability – are the themes of contemporary Islamic political activism. These themes are manifested on two levels: in the efforts of various regimes to legitimate their rule officially through Islam; and in the efforts of various popular activist groups to challenge the legitimacy of existing regimes on the grounds of accountability to Islamic codes.

From the point of view of institutional building and legitimization of government the Islamic legitimization has been viewed as a cultural imperative and used as a political tool. But with the emergence of an Islamic activist movement, it has become a political imperative. 'However, from this angle, one of the government's problem in Egypt has been the fact that more than half a dozen small but Islamic groups (collectively known as al-Jama'at al Islamiyya) are operating in addition to the Brotherhood. And it is not at all clear which action should be attributed to which group, or how strong those other groups are, either in

number or resources. What was clear by early 1980, however was that one of the strongest and perhaps the best organized of those other groupings was the one known as 'Jihad' organization. The group was organized in the 1977. Historically, Jihad has a complex organization which is not fully understood.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, al-Jihad barely existed as a formal organizational entity; instead it usually took the form of loosely coordinated sub-groups. Indeed, there seemed to have been as many as five al-Jihad groups which believe in their demand that a pure Islamic State be set up in Egypt, with Shari'a as a state law.

Although al-Jihad drew its members from the Muslim Brotherhood, the university – based Islamic Jama'at, and a variety of other sources, its genealogy can be traced back to the Islamic Liberation Organization of Dr. Salih Siriyya. During the suppression of the Islamic Liberation Organization by the government in 1974, two Islamic Liberation Organization members (Hasan al-Halawi and Salim al-Rahhal)<sup>63</sup> escaped arrest. They subsequently began setting up a new militant Islamic organization (the first Jihad), primarily in Alexandria. In August 1977 this organization was uncovered and broken up by the authorities, with some eighty members (including al-Halawi) being arrested (Ismael & Ismael, 1985:119).

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62. The Jihad group became apparent with the assassination of President Sadat in 1981, an act for which they were held responsible as an organization. The group is still committed to armed struggle against the regime and the establishment of an Islamic system of government. The name 'Jihad' was given to the organization by the authorities; members merely refer to it as 'al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya'. This issue of the organization's name became more confusing, however, when, in the 1980s, the group splintered into two groups, the Jihad and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya. Both espouse similar aims and tactics but seem to differ over the issue of leadership. Today's Jihad, and its military wing, Tal'a al fath, reject the leadership of Omar Abdel-Rahman, although he was originally reputed to be the leading figure for the Jihad group, which turned to the fatwa (religious ruling and legitimization) for Sadat's assassination.

63. Al-Rahhal was Palestinian by birth.

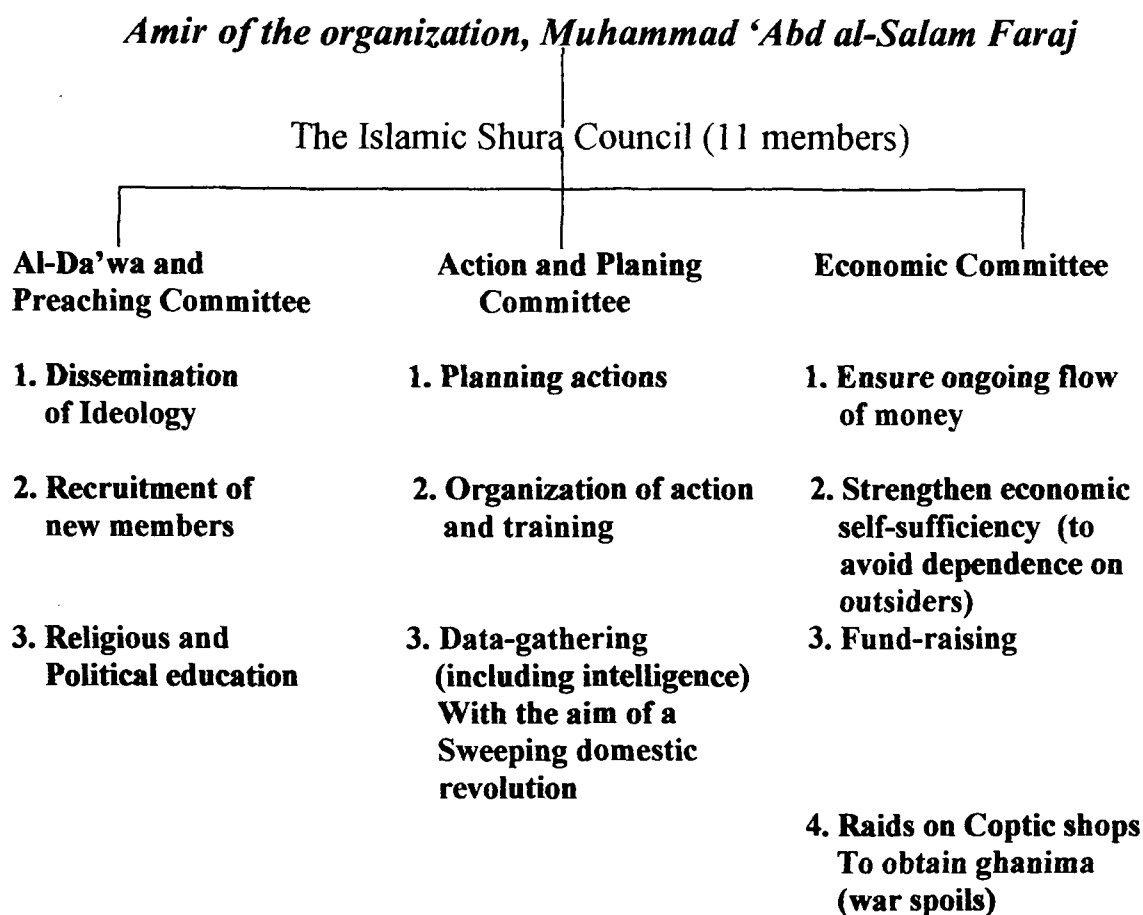
With the suppression of the first Jihad's top leadership, a new individual assumed a key role in the organization. Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, a former member of the first Jihad, set about – reorganizing al-Jihad. Al-Faraj wrote a pamphlet entitled al-Farida al-Ghai'ba<sup>64</sup> (The Neglected Imperative), which the authorities later described as the Jihad's constitution.

Faraj, who assumed the role of Jihad's chief ideologue, was joined in the leadership by a colonel in Egyptian military intelligence, 'Abbud al-Zumur,<sup>65</sup> who assumed charge of the organization's military planning and training along with Karem Zuhdi, who was in charge of organization and recruitment in upper Egypt. In 1980 a consultative council (Majlis al-Shura) was established for second Jihad group, with functional subcommittee being set up to co-ordinate and oversee military training, fundraising, and recruitment. It was at this time that the chairmanship of the council was offered to Shaykh Omar Abd al-Rahman, a 43-year-old blind religious instructor at al-Azhar's Asyut branch (Ansari, 1984:126). Faraj as Amir of this organization geared up the various institutions of his movement according to a structured division of labor. The Shura Council, with 11 members, was the supreme council of the movement. He also organized three committees and detailed out their respective functions as follows:

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64. This pamphlet has been reprinted in many places, and has been widely circulated throughout the world among Muslim communities. The pamphlet bears no publication data. It is generally prefaced by a quotation from Sayyid Qutb.

65. Abbud al-Zumur, a young army officer, appears to have played an important organizational role. He actually believed that the group should delay political action for a few years until an Islamic revolution could count on the popular support that would give it the same kind of success that the Iranian revolution had enjoyed



**Figure 2 : Organization of Islamic Shura Council**

Sagive, David (1995:57) Fundamentalism and intellectuals in Egypt 1973-1993 , London: Frank Cass.

Al-Jihad had two main branches, with the Cairo branch under the direct control of Amir Abdel Salam Faraj (apparently controlling the activities in other parts of the Delta as well) and the branch in upper Egypt, particularly covering Minya and Asyut, under the leadership of Karam Zuhdi (Kepel, 1985:194). Its members working in the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia, provided

most of its financial resources. According to a confession of one of its members, the total sum received by the group was £E 20,000. The group also robbed a leading jewelry shop in north Cairo (Ansari, 1984:126).

In fact, Islamic militants in general had a relatively high literacy rate and higher mobility patterns, though they came predominantly from the lower middle class. The leadership of the Jihad group, however, was a 'curious mixture of people with different backgrounds and social origins'. Many came from families of better social standing and prestige than the leadership of the earlier militant groups.

Faraj, like many others in the group, belonged to the lower middle class; his father was an employee of the health ministry. Abbud al-Zomur, another top leader of the group, came from a family of relatively high standing. His father was the Umda (chief) of the family village, Nahya in Giza district. Himself a colonel in the army intelligence, he had an uncle in the army of the rank of general; another uncle was a member of Majlis al-Shura, the upper house of the Egyptian parliament; three close relatives were majors in the army (Ansari, 1984:134).

Unlike Shukri Mustafa who cared little for the traditional Islamic authority, Faraj's Neglected Duty was full of quotations from the Qur'an, the Sunna, and from other authoritative sources of the past. This in effect emphasising that his ideology was based on standard of Islamic sources (Kepel, 1985:194).

The theme of the booklet was to justify the ex-communication of the rulers of the country and to invoke what it asserted was every Muslim's duty to revolt against such rulers and to go in for an armed struggle against them. It

focused on the failure of the rulers to respect the Islamic law and to implement it, which had taken them out of the Islamic fold. This had made the revolt against them obligatory on all Muslims.

‘The establishment of the caliphate – an Islamic State – was obligatory on Muslims’, Faraj said. He quoted approvingly Abu Hanifa, the originator of one of the four schools of Islamic law, who had said that the House of Islam (*meaning the area where Muslims live and rule themselves*) would change into a House of unbelief if Muslims were ruled by laws other than those of Islam. In defence of his arguments, Faraj also used to frequently cite Ibn Taymiya, the 14<sup>th</sup> century Islamic theologian and reformer. Ibn Taymiya had been bitterly opposed to Mongol rule over the lands of the Caliphate. When he was asked whether the city of Mardin in upper Mesopotamia, which was being ruled by a Muslim prince on behalf of the Mongols, was a House of Peace, Ibn Taymiya made it clear that he did not consider it as either the House of Peace or the House of War. It was not the House of Peace because it was not ruled by the law of Islam : the Mongols, though they had accepted Islam, introduced their own system of law called Yasiq, overlooking the Shari’a. Nor was it the House of War, because it was inhabited by Muslims, whereas the House of War should be inhabited by infidels. Ibn Taymiya therefore invented a third, vague category. He merely said that in the city of Mardin Muslims should be treated to what was due to them; and ‘anyone who rebelled against the law of Islam should be treated according to what was due to him’. Ibn Taymiya also made it clear that ‘anyone who facilitated the spread of any religion other than Islam or any law other than the law of Muhammad, was an infidel’. In Islam, belief in one part of it and



unbelief in another part was unacceptable and amounted to total unbelief (Bari, 1995:134-135).

From these theological formulations, Faraj extrapolated to contemporary Egypt. According to him although the majority of Egyptians were Muslims, the State was being ruled by the laws of unbelief, enacted by infidels (the western legal system). The present-day rulers were in apostasy from Islam. They were 'raised at the table of imperialism, be it Crusadism or Communism or Zionism'. Though they claimed to be Muslims and performed Islamic rites, they carried 'nothing from Islam except their names' (Jansen, 1986:165-169).

In his view the restoration of Islam in its totality could not be accomplished through the establishment of benevolent societies. Also, the formation of a political party would be counter productive, being tantamount to collaborating with the pagan state. All 'Muslim doctors and Muslim engineers serving such a state were in fact instrumental in building of this pagan state. The propagation of religion became ineffective because the means of mass communication were under the control of the pagan and wicked (state) and in (control) of those who were at war with the religion of God' (Quoted in Jansen, 1986:182-186).

‘ The ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb compared his time with the Meccan period of the prophet to suggest that preaching, and not confrontation, was imperative for a period of time in view of the weakness of Islamic groups.) Clearly, this went against Faraj's call for immediate jihad. Faraj refuted Qutb's argument by pointing out that reference to the Meccan period was irrelevant because Islam descended in its final form before the Prophet passed

away. 'We are not at the beginning of something as the Prophet was', he argued and asserted that 'it is clear that today jihad is an individual duty of every Muslim; it is fighting which means confrontation and blood, because the enemy is in the middle of them (Muslims) and has got hold of the reins of power. This enemy is (none other than) these rulers who have illegally seized the leadership of the Muslims' (Quoted in Jansen, 1986:199-200).

Al-Jihad drew a distinction between state and society, and aimed at the seizure of state power: 'we proceed from the top to the bottom because we believe that a good ruler can create everything in society' (Quoted in Ismael & Ismael, 1985:121). Nevertheless as one of the functionary of al-Jihad group he maintained that mass support was not necessary or perhaps not even achievable: not only was mass propaganda difficult to disseminate successfully in a society controlled by unbelievers but, in addition, the righteousness of the militant's cause guaranteed them victory (Ansari, 1984:127).

As one can make out that, most of the ideas he expressed in al-Farida al-Gha'iba bear resemblance to the ideas contained in several tracts and pamphlets written by Shukri Mustafa, the leader of the society of al-Takfir wa-al-Hijra. The only difference is that Faraj demanded of his followers to stand up and fight and not to take flight, for this was not a Meccan society – an allusion to the prophet's migration to Medina when the Meccan society rejected the new religion.

The principles underlying the militant doctrine of Jihad group as pronounced in 1970s not only contradict, but also posed a challenge to the traditional views on Islam as advocated by religious authority. It is no surprise, therefore, to observe that the militant doctrine provoked the traditional 'Ulama to

give up a long-standing policy of ignoring the militants and respond critically to each one of the points raised by them. The criticism of the militant doctrine by the Ulama thus offers a chance to observe the basic differences between the militant ideology and traditional Islam in Egypt.

The position of traditional Islam on the militant views was stated in the official response to al-Farida al-Gha'iba was particularly instructive. For it was/is used as an evidence against its authors. The main objection was that Faraj misinterpreted Ibn Taymiya and distorted the Qur'an by his selection of some verses while suppressing others that went against his militant stance. He found a close resemblance between the Jihad group and a heterodox movement which was known in history as the Kharijites.<sup>66</sup> The latter raised the slogan of *la hukm illa li-lilah* (there is no rule but that of God) in the struggle between Ali and Mu'awiya for the Caliphate. Like the Kharijites, the Jihad group raised the slogan of *al-hakimiyya* and upheld the purity of their beliefs, while rejecting all outsiders as unbelievers (Ansari, 1984:138).

After dismissing the interpretations of Faraj as too narrow and literal for a correct understanding of the deeper meanings of the traditional texts, the Grand Mufti of Egypt under the official patronage explained the status of faith, authority, and rebellion in Islam. According to his standing a person's faith remained intact as long as he continued to believe in the existence of God and the

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66. The khariji movement was a legalistic puritan group that arose in the early years of Islam during the rule of Muhammad's son-in-law 'Ali as fourth Caliph (d.661). It was the first Muslim sect. The kharijis rejected all Muslims who did not accept their interpretation of Islam as infidels worthy of death. They developed an ideology of continuous jihad and rebelled against all rulers until finally suppressed after some two hundred years of bloodshed. Remnants of the original khariji movement survive today in the ibadis of Oman and in the mzabis of Algeria.

prophecy of Muhammad. There were no grounds in Islam to accuse such a person of unbelief even if a grave sin was committed by him. In a similar compromising vein, the Grand Mufti rejected the claim that a ruler would lose his legitimacy if he enforced only some parts of God's ruling as revealed in the Qur'an and the Sunna. Legitimacy was maintained so long as the ruler observed Islamic tenets 'even through the holding of prayers only'. As for the ideal form of government, the Grand Mufti asserted that there was nothing in the original texts which determined the legitimacy of one form of government or another. Thus the Caliphate and the succeeding forms of government which replaced it were conditioned by historical circumstances. Under present conditions, elections replaced the pledge which people traditionally offered to their rulers (Ansari, 1984:138-139).

The liberal image of Islam was further pointed out in the relation of Muslims with non-Muslims. Humanitarian values, compassion, forgiveness, and social tolerance were all underscored by the Divine injunction *la ikrah fi al-din* (there is no coercion in religion). Similarly, the religious authorities found ample evidence in the holy text and in the tradition of the prophet to support Sadat's peace initiative and the Camp David agreement, which were vehemently denounced by the various fundamentalist groups.

It is interesting to note that the fatwa of Al-Azhar (religious authorities) nullified its own fatwa issued some twenty years ago stating that 'recognition to and cooperation with the state of Israel is not Islamically permissible' (Quoted in Dessouki, 1983:138). Like wise, Sadat also secured the support of ulama when he visited Jerusalem in 1977. Those supporting this

historic act included the Rector of Al-Azhar, the Presidents of Egyptian university student unions and the Muslim Youth Association.

While at the same time he himself continuously emphasized the religious aspects of his peace mission. While addressing the Knesset he stressed the historic ties between Islam and Judaism and stated that it was Prophet Muhammad who had ordered the people of Yathrab – Jews and Muslim – to form one nation and to practice their respective religion in peace and harmony (Waterbury, 1985:210).

However, by 1981, Sadat's popularity was at its lowest ebb, for the country was beset with economic as well as political problems. Having encouraged the emergence and growth of Islamic political elements, Sadat found himself unable to control them. Lacking in political will to face Islamic opposition, he banned some fifteen Islamic societies, took control over some 40,000 private mosques and ordered that the sermons in them be cleared by the Ministry of Waqfs (Religious endowment).

However one of Sadat's problems at this time was almost totally overlooked in the Western press and by Western analysts: the significant upsurge in the political consciousness and activity of the Coptic community – its determined effort to resurrect the Coptic language (at the expense of Arabic), its efforts to proselytize and to develop new churches, schools, and socio-political organization. Ironically, the United States encouraged this: the visit by the Coptic Patriarch Pope Senuda III to President Jimmy Carter in 1977 increased his visibility and prestige. In other words, although the activities of the Islamic groups helped to arouse the Copts, the latter's increased militancy in turn further

stimulated the Muslim resurgence, and created the fear of a vastly increased social and political role for the Copts and the church.

By 1981, Sadat had reneged on many of his earlier promises regarding political dissent and opposition – in the press, in the National Assembly, as well as other forms of political organization. In fact, the wide spectrum of viewpoints represented in the arrests in the summer of 1981 showed how seriously Sadat had eroded his bases of support: politicians of the right and the left. Members of the various Islamic associations, as well as leaders of the Coptic, elements of the business elite as well as journalists, professors, media personalities, and so forth.

It was at that time that Lieutenant Khalid al-Islambuli, the member of al-Jihad contacted Faraj and said that he had been asked to participate in a military parade and that this would be an ideal opportunity to assassinate Sadat and senior government officials, Faraj agreed with al-Islambuli, but he did not give approval before consulting with the other members of the leadership. Only ‘Abbud al-Zumur objected to the plan, believing that the organization was not yet ready for this action. He thought there was a good chance that the plan would be discovered and the entire organization would also be exposed. After discussion, however, the plan was approved and ‘Abbud al-Zumur withdrew his opposition. In retrospect, ‘Abbud al-Zumur was right. On 2 September 1981, about one month before the parade, Sadat gave orders to arrest 1,536 people on suspicion of exploiting previous events in an attempt to bring down the government. Among those arrested were intellectuals, authors, journalists and nine of the eleven numbers of the Shura Council of the Jihad Organization. Al-Zumur believed that

at least another two years should pass before any attempt to mount popular revolution to establish the caliphate should be made. Nevertheless, 'Abbud al-Zumur gave his approval and began to carefully make plans, determined to succeed (Sagive, 1995:58).

Thus, on 6 October 1981, during a military parade in the city of Nasr, near Cairo, Lieutenant Khalid al-Islambuli forced the driver of his vehicle to halt opposite the reviewing stand, lobbed in two hand grenades, only one of which exploded, returned to his car for a machine-gun, and emptied it into the 'who is who' of the government and dignitaries in the stand. Two more officers who were members of the Jihad Organization joined al-Islambuli, opening fire, and throwing grenades. A fourth sniper set his sights on Sadat, still standing, who caught a bullet in his neck which proved to be fatal. After the chaos, which lasted no more than 40 seconds, security people who were not wounded began to return fire, capturing three at once and the fourth a few days later (Sagiv, 1995:58-59). Thus it was by the summer of 1981, Sadat had created the situation which inevitably produced the outcome which so shocked the world.

In the case involving the conspiracy to assassinate the President, Khalid al-Islambouli and his associates directly involved in the deed were hanged. No one in the case of al-Jihad group was given capital punishment: only a few top leaders being given life terms. 'Umar Abdel Rahman, ideologue of the group and one of the prime accused in the case, was acquitted on the ground that he did not participate in establishing the organization of the jihad and did not hold any position in it, although the court recognized that the leaders of the organization in Upper Egypt remained in touch with him while it was being established, and that

he, as a salafite, entertained the concept of jihad. The court also recognized the validity of his position as an 'alim to issue fatwa, and viewed his assertions in the court (and also outside the court) on the obligation to rule and give judgement according to what God has revealed as correct, pointing out that there is no difference among the Muslims on this issue. While acquitting 'Umar, the court also denounced the brutal treatment meted out to him during interrogation (Bari, 1995:145).<sup>67</sup>

¶ After the assassination of Sadat, the vice president Muhammad Husni Mubarak was confirmed as President at a referendum on 13 October 1981. With the ascendancy of Husni Mubarak as the president of Egypt, the nature of the relationship between the regime and the Islamic mass movement entered a new phase characterized by greater tolerance of Islamic criticism and Brotherhood's accommodation within the Egyptian political system.) Though continuing Sadat's policy of *infatih*, peace with Israel and closer alliance with the United States, Mubarak adopted different political tactics from those employed during Sadat's presidency in his dealings with the various moderate and radical Islamic groups. Thus, whereas his predecessor, the believing president, had muzzled all political expressions while giving full rein to Islamic groups, especially in the universities, in order to confront the Nasserist left on the campus and elsewhere and to force it into silence, Mubarak encouraged political debate, gave free hand to opposition parties and the press which led one scholar to remark that by the Middle of the 1980s Cairo could claim, that given the destruction of Beirut and excluding the

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67. It was generally held that the Chief Justice, Abdel Ghaffar Mohammad, showed considerable sympathy for the accused, and was particularly impressed by 'Umar's arguments. The softness of the court in the case, however, would not have come about without a reconsideration by the Government of the issue.



‘offshore’ Arab press produced in Europe, it had the liveliest and most varied press in the Arab world (Mcdermott, 1988:76). It is because of these limited political liberalization measures that besides the semi-official organs Al-Ahram, Al-Akbar and Al-Gumhouriya, several oppositional press corps including Al-Liwa Al-Islami ; Al-Mukhtar Al-Islami, Al-Itisam and Al-Nur resurfaced on the national scene. Al-Nur became a virulent champion of the Islamisation of practices and mores (However the ban on Al-Da’wa has not still been lifted). In fact, political freedom enjoyed by the press was confined to free debate and discussion over the relevance of Islamic social custom, a policy which the regime hoped would lead to divisions within the Islamic ranks.

Having set Islamic discourse in the midst of ‘controlled pluralism’, the regime of Mubarak in its initial years strove to divide the Islamic ranks by isolating the extremists from the moderates and by encouraging the expression of certain of its leaders in various organs of the press. In fact, the policy of isolating the radical militant Islamic organizations, which Mubarak dubbed as ‘terrorist extremism’, has been the hallmark of Mubarak’s regime throughout the eighties and even in nineties. In his meeting with Khaled Mohammaddin, Head of the Marxist Nasserists Party (NPUP), Mubarak said, ‘The fundamentalist will kill you before they kill me’ stressing the common interest in combating the militant Islamic threat (Ahmad, 1987-1988:23).

¶ However despite the heavy repression of the Islamic movement in the autumn of 1981 (due to the Sadat’s assassination), the Muslim Brotherhood managed to emerge as the main opposition to Mubarak’s regime. Encouraged by the initial conciliatory attitude of the ruling regime, the Brotherhood under the

leadership of Omer Telmisani increased its membership and opted for political pluralism and parliamentary democracy as the road to achieve their ideals - goal of establishment of 'Islamic order', discarding the path of violence. The Brothers thus consistently dismissed the argument that Islam and democracy are incompatible. Al-Hudaybi, in the wake of organization's opposition in the 1989, identified various attributes of democracy he deemed important, such as respect for the constitution, on independent judiciary, press freedom, party independence, and man's protection from torture (Kotob, 1995:325)✓

In their contemporary approach, however, there was an appreciative acknowledgment that despite some setbacks, Mubarak's regime had opened doors to democracy which previously were closed on them.

¶ Thus in the elections for the People's Assembly held in May 1984 the Muslim Brotherhood, which officially remained illegal, formed an alliance with the Wafd, a liberal and semi-secular party which President Mubarak had allowed to operate in 1983. This was seen as a purely opportunistic maneuver on the part of both the Wafd and the Brotherhood. The strategy paid off, to the extent that the New Wafd Party won 59 of the 448 contested seats, allowing the Muslim Brotherhood, with at least 8 known members and many more probable sympathizers, significant parliamentary representatives for the first time. It came second only to Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP)<sup>68</sup> and thus served as

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68. The ruling NDP was founded by the late President Anwar Sadat in 1978. The Party's name is drawn from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century anti-British National Party set up by Mustafa Kamel in 1907. President Husni Mubarak also serves as the party's chairman. The NDP's platform has remained practically the same since the party was established. The foreign policy of the NDP is heavily tied to Egyptian-US relations. Mubarak also play's an important role as a regional peace broke for the Palestinian/Israeli peace process ([http://metimes.com/2k/issue2000-42/eg/rundown\\_of\\_egypts.htm](http://metimes.com/2k/issue2000-42/eg/rundown_of_egypts.htm)).

the major opposition in the People's Assembly (Egyptian Parliament), for three years. In March 1986 the Brotherhood showed that they were not just a formidable minority when more than 100 members of People's Assembly defied party boundaries to sign a petition calling on the government to honor its pledge to pursue further the issue of making the Shari'a the sole and binding source of law for the country.) The growing pressure of pro-Islamic forces in the parliament resulted in the abolition of Women's Right law (also called Jihan's law) of 1979, in May 1985 which declared that Polygamy was legally harmful to the first wife and automatically gave her the right to divorce her husband (Medermott, 1988:200). Perhaps, this concession was a buildup to a calculated end to four years of relative benevolence by the government towards outspoken religious opposition.

Though the government conceded the demand for the abolition of Jihan's law, essentially to placate the sentiments of moderate Islamic group, it refused to commit itself on the implementation of Shari'a in May 1985. The government's postponement of the implementation of Shari'a provoked the strongest criticism from various individual preachers and Islamic groups. Among the individual preachers, the two most important figures were shaykh Ahmad al Mahallawi, the imam of Qaid Ibrahim mosque in Alexandria and Shaykh Hafiz Salamah.<sup>69</sup> However, it was the latter who embodied the Islamicist confrontation with the regime during the mid eighties. Speaking from Al-Nur mosque in

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69. Shaykh Salamah was the head of Jamiyyat al-Hidaya al-Islamiyya in Suez. He delivered sermons at both al-Shuhada mosque in Suez and al-Nur mosque in Cairo. Both were private mosques. The latter was a popular meeting place for the militant. Shaykh Salamah was one of the outspoken critics of the Peace Treaty with Israel during the end of Sadat regime.

Abbassiya Cairo, which had become the prime Islamic stronghold and a centre of pro-Islamic pronouncements and criticism of the government, Salamah announced in June 1985 the plan of "Green March" at the Presidential residence to make certain the implementation of Shari'a. However, the proposed march was called off in the face of strong security deployment. Salamah was arrested but was soon released on the occasion of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

It was against this background of rising Islamic opposition forces that the government issued a decree placing some 60,000 (almost all the private mosques in Egypt) under the supervision of the Ministry of Awqaf which was also to supply the imams to preach more orthodox Friday sermons than the politically inclined versions which had been purveyed hitherto (Kepel 1985:256, Mcdermott 1988:93,210).

(The mainstream Muslim Brotherhood, however, continued on its moderate course. In the 1987 parliamentary election, the Brotherhood shifted its alliance from Wafd to two small parties – the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and the Liberal Party (LP), and formed a new coalition called Islamic Alliance (IA). In this election, the Islamic Alliance won about 60 seats, ahead of the new Wafd Party which won a reduced total of 35 seats, and came second only to the pro-government NDP. As a dominant partner in the Islamic Alliance thus the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as the single largest legal opposition to the Mubarak regime.<sup>70</sup> The coalitions forged by the Brotherhood with secular political parties were necessary to bypass the state's legislative restrictions on their participation in

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70. It is alleged that the power of Ikhwan lay in its support from the fundamentalist financial sources and the Ikhwan's success in 1987 parliamentary election owes much to the rise of 'petro-Islam', i.e. the Saudi-backed Islamic companies (Moench, Spring 1989:184-187).

the electoral system. The Egyptian law requiring individual parties to get at least 8 percent of votes cast to gain representation in Parliament, coupled with the law preventing nonparty organizations from entering elections, meant that coalition was the only mechanism that could both allow the Brotherhood to enter the elections and give them a chance at gaining the necessary 8 percent. The situation changed in 1990, when, to counter the electoral gains made by Islamists, the election law was changed to allow only individuals, not parties, to participate. To protest what was perceived as the government's attempt to maintain political control of the assembly, most opposition groups, including the Brotherhood and coalition partners, boycotted the 1990 elections.

There was also significant evidence that the Brotherhood had become even more inclined to use the political system. The most important indication of their proclivity to accommodate the system was their emphasis on elevating the organization to the status of a recognized political party. Ma mun al-Hudaybi noted that despite the boycott, 'the Brothers are the main political power in the state.... We are prepared to operate within the realm of political party pluralism and the declaration of the Muslim Brotherhood Party' (Al-Ahram, 1994:334). Mustafa Mashhur, deputy to former General Guide al-Tilmisani, argues that legal party status and removal of restrictions on the group's activities 'will help spread the spirit of good relations' among Egyptians and unite the nation (Al-Ahram, 1994:334-335).<sup>1</sup>

For purposes of 'democratic' participation however it continued to express support for the path of moderation, gradualism and constitutionalism to realize their goals of 'application of Shari'a and the creation of 'Islamic Order'.

The organization also distanced itself from the violence and Holy Flight (al-Takfir wal-Hijra) and Holy war (al-Jihad) groups. However, the organization never failed to point out that had the state allowed political rights to its own organizations, these fanatic groups would not have flourished underground.

A polarized situation between the radical Islamist groups and the government however continued to develop. (The Muslim Brotherhood itself found little room to maneuver given the unwillingness on the part of the government to allow the democratic process to proceed unhindered. By functioning within the limited parameters the state had conceded to them, however (namely, the opportunity to participate in elections under the umbrella of another party), the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters were gradually questioning the government's legitimacy by their constant call for the application of the shari'a. The call to have the shari'a applied as the principal source of legislation in conformity with Article 2 of the constitution of 1971, as amended in 1979, unleashed a major debate on the Islamic credentials of the state (Altman, 1979:209)./

The government's attempt at 'national dialogue' during 1994 with some opposition figures, labour leaders, and Islamists had lacked credibility. The government under this situation emphasized more on economic issues as the core of the problem and sought acknowledgment that more time is needed in order to improve the economic situation, while barring discussion on constitutional reform. At the same time, part of the government's motive was to seek condemnation from the opposition and independent figures of the wave of militant Islamist activities. The government's attempt to develop a dialogue with its opponents did not

represent a retreat from its determination to eradicate the radical Islamist groups but was mainly an attempt to pursue a different policy of control and containment .

Despite the obstacles confronted by the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama'at al-Islamiyya<sup>71</sup> in their legitimate participation in the political arena, they have nevertheless functioned through various secondary political channels, such as professional syndicates<sup>72</sup> and student unions. They continued to increase their popularity by combining the adept use of some democratic procedures with the operation of a network of social services that includes schools, clinics, and banks and by the late 1980s, the Brotherhood had already gained control of the doctors', engineers', and pharmacists' professional associations and all significant indicators of political Participation at the grass-roots, or civil society, level. In 1992, Brotherhood's control reached one of the oldest and most prominent of the syndicates – the Lawyers' Association – after winning two-thirds of the seats in the administrative assemble. Their victory allowed them to assume important

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71. The Jama'at al-Islamiyya (not to be confused with al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya) is a creation of the 1970s, when members first appeared on university campuses and began to gain control of student unions throughout the country. They contributed a great deal to the initial assertion of Islam among the young in post-Nasserist Egypt. By the 1980s, their influence had spread beyond the campuses and involved welfare work. Overall they became synonymous with Islamist political assertion, and both moderate and radical social and political activities were attributed to them. Although the activities of the Jama'at throughout the country generally followed a similar pattern, activists nevertheless tended to follow the instructions of their particular amir (leader). Thus in one context, for example, Assiut, they would pursue more violent activities than in other areas.

72. There are 22 professional syndicates in Egypt with a total of 3.5 million members. The ascendancy of the Muslim Brothers as a controlling majority took place in the five most politically active syndicates, representing doctors, engineers, pharmacists, scientists, and lawyers. Some analysts have argued that the reason behind the Muslim Brothers' decision to exert political control over the syndicates was in reaction to the government's harassment in the 1980s of Islamists in Egypt, and its imposition of various restrictions on them both inside and outside parliament. Those restrictions had prevented the Muslim Brotherhood from acting as an opposition party, and had caused a decline in its representation in parliament in the 1990s (Fahmy, Autumn 1998:552-553).

positions in the association, with Saif al-Islam al-Banna, a son of Hassan al-Banna, becoming the secretary general (Kotob, 1995:329).

Success in non-governmental organizations had given the Brotherhood a chance to be heard among the educated in Egypt. They were able to express their views at professional conferences held by associations and universities. (At a 1991 conference organized in Zagazig by Engineer's Syndicate, for example, representatives of the Brotherhood decried the excesses of emergency law and the restrictions on civil liberties.)

(It was at that time that the government has introduced legislation aimed at diluting Brotherhood influence in the professional associations it used to command respect (Financial Times, 22 April 1993). The union law, officially known as 'The Democratic Guarantees of Professional Syndicates', issued on 17 February 1993 deliberately to make it harder for the Muslim Brotherhood to maintain control of the professional unions. It required 50 percent of the syndicate's members to vote in the first round of council elections if they are to be valid (Civil Society, March 1996).<sup>1</sup> The union law was designed to break the dominance of the Brotherhood. It assumed that the Brotherhood, a small but organized group whose supporters never failed to vote, won their majority because of a low voter turnout (Reuter, 13 January 1994).) The law was issued with 24 hours without consultation with those concerned, i.e. the syndicates' boards of directors and general assemblies (Civil Society, March, 1995). The Egyptian Organization for Human Right (EOHR), a non-governmental organization that investigated allegations of human rights abuses and other related matter, issued a press release calling the union law 'a violation of all that is claimed in its title, i.e.



‘providing democratic guarantees’. The EOHR stated that the law was a violation of the rules of both the ‘International Convention on Civil and Political rights’ and the ‘International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ to which Egypt is a party. EOHR went on to call the law ‘legislative terrorism which cannot be separated from the rapid deterioration of the state of human rights in Egypt during the last few years’ (Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, March 1993).

A year after the passing of the union law, critics claimed that it has backfired. Islamist activists were confident that they could maintain their powerful position within the syndicates. (The Brotherhood-controlled Engineers Association saw its elections delayed three times because of problems related to the application of the new law.) The Secretary-General of the Engineer Association, Mohammad Basher, said in an interview with Reuter that, ‘he believed the government had delayed the elections using various excuses to block an Islamist victory’ (Reuter, 13 January 1994).)

(Further, in 1992, to check the growing popularity of the Brotherhood, amendment to the law was passed which prohibited political activity by groups lacking legal status. It was at the same time that, the Mubarak Government refused to engage in any political dialogue with the Brotherhood.) The NDP Deputy Secretary-General, Kamal al-Shazli, however, stated that political dialogue would only take part with ‘officially recognized organizations’ (Al-Ahram Weekly, 18-24 November 1993).

(Despite the curbs on the political activities, the Brotherhood’s dual call for the respect of basic liberties (hurriyat) and implementation of the Shari’a

throughout the 90s remained effective and powerful one that found a resonance in society.) There was also a growing demand for the respect of civil liberties voiced by both secularist and Islamists with professional syndicates, student groups, lawyers, and writers speaking out about human rights abuses. For the Islamists, both radical and moderate, these abuses seemed to be mainly directed at them. (The main demands being made by the Muslim Brotherhood and moderate Islamists in general was for their rights to freedom of speech against the government, protection against torture, access to due process of law, an end to corruption, and the implementation of the Shari'a. They believed that political pluralism is a guarantee of these and a legitimate process through which the Shari'a could be implemented; therefore, at this stage their commitment to democratization is greater than that of the government.

However, the state continued to bar the Brotherhood from official recognition and full cooperation with the regime. Saif al-Islam Hasan al-Banna, son of the founder of the Brotherhood, urged the government to 'open the doors to all to participate in decision-making.... (This) will therefore guarantee that all will execute it (democracy) and abide by it' (Quoted in Kotob, 1995:325). The call for greater democracy was also made by Dr. Muhammad Umara of the Brotherhood: )

**If Mubarak opens the doors and windows to listen to thinkers and leaders of Islam and their struggle and views on the Islamic renaissance (Nahda), his picture of the Islamic solution would change.... This encourages us to ask President Mubarak, whom we recognize as having transferred the relationship between the state and Islam a clash with the Islamist movement to a period of truce (hudna).... If he opens the doors to the thinkers and leaders of the Islamist movement, he will find a new color of men who give without considering the cost (Quoted in Kotob, 1995:325-326).**

{The Brotherhood considered it imperative that democratic freedoms be expanded and an open multiparty system established, such that their group will be able to operate independently and not necessarily in consort with an alliance of other political parties.}

In the 1995 elections, government tried to maneuver situation in its favour in an unprecedented degree. In the Cairo suburb of Madinat Nasr, for instance, the official NDP candidate got more than 10,000 nonexistent or non-resident names added to the voters' register. (Just before the beginning of the campaign, the regime referred to a military court several prominent members of the Muslim Brotherhood whom it accused of belonging to an illegal organization. Officially banned, the Muslim Brotherhood was generally tolerated but also regularly harassed. This time the choice of the court was no less significant than the timing of the changes, as hitherto only alleged members of armed Islamist groups had been tried by military tribunals (Kienle, 1998:226). The trial was, on the one hand, a financial blow as well as a warning to the Muslim Brothers; on the other hand, it was meant to demonstrate to the voters that votes cast for the Brotherhood's candidates would probably be lost votes.

On the eve of the first round of elections, more than 1,000 members and sympathizers of the Brotherhood were arrested. Most of them were campaign workers or representatives of candidates, who by law were entitled to observe the voting in polling stations, as well as the subsequent counting of the vote.) Representatives of other opposition candidates were also expelled or turned away from polling stations, where ballot boxes arrived stuffed with voting papers or else disappeared prior to the count. Numerous polling stations were ransacked by paid

thugs, and several opposition candidates were prevented from voting while the police stood by. Finally, candidates were declared elected by the minister of the interior without any indication of the number or percentage of votes they had obtained. Following some 900 appeals, the court of cassation recommended that the election of more than 200 deputies out of a total of 444 be invalidated. The newly elected parliament that included the 200 deputies concerned, refused to follow these recommendations (Kienle, 1998:226-227).<sup>73</sup>

Partly through direct interference and partly by condoning the activities of NDP candidates, the regime somehow managed to get a parliament elected in which its own party obtained 94 percent of the seats, and indeed its largest majority ever. It was true that the opposition parties suffered from numerous weakness, ranging from material shortages to leaders and programs that failed to appeal to the voters. None of these weaknesses, however, was as crucial as their lack of a special relationship with the regime.

Following the 1995 election, the Ibn Khaldun Center, the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (EOHR) and the Center for Human Rights Legal Aid (HRLA) reported that:

**Their (government) reports documented numerous irregularities prior to and during the elections, including the harassment, intimidation and often arrest of opposition candidates, the presence of security officials inside the polling stations, strong-arm tactics designed to influence voting and vote rigging (<http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/mea/Egypt-election-bck.htm>)**

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73. For detailed information on irregularities and interference in the 1995 elections, see, The Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (1996), 'Democracy jeopardized: The Egyptian Organization of Human Rights' account of the Egyptian Parliamentary Elections of 1995', Cairo: The Egyptian Organization of Human Rights.

Ibn Khaldun Center also condemned acts of violence during the elections, which resulted in the death of over sixty people and injuries to many others.

Desperate to save its image the government's response to the militant threat posed by the Gama'a al-Islamiyya and other militant groups at this time however was more swift. An all out war was declared against the militants. According to the Interior Minister Hassan al-Alfi, 'police campaigns against the militants are being launched day and night and will not stop as long as there is a single terrorist in the republic, security forces will not rest until these elements are finished off' (Al-Ahram Weekly, 3-9 February 1994). Methods used by the police clampdown ~~has~~ resulted in widespread allegations of police brutality from communities caught in the crossfire. For example, in March 1993 an attack during the holy month of Ramadan on the Rahman mosque in Aswan, believed to be the local headquarters of the Gama'a al-Islamiyya, resulted in nine deaths and 40 injured. According to a lawyer acting on behalf of 80 men arrested after the assault, police 'tried to kill as many people as they could' (Observer, 14 March 1993).

According to EHRO (1994), 'it appeared that the government policy at the moment was to imprison less and kill more'. The government consistently ordered the storming of militant hideouts. The incidents include the storming of an apartment building in the Cairo suburb of al-Zawya al-Hamra in February 1994; seven militants were shot dead apparently after little resistance. Eight militants were killed in the Southern town of Edfu, nearly a month later (Reuter, 28 February 1994).

According to EHRO the government detained militant suspects by conducting arbitrary security sweeps, especially in areas of Upper Egypt. Anybody suspected of having anything to do with the militant organizations was arrested. The Secretary-General of EOHR had declared in 1994 that the government carried out a policy of 'precautionary arrest'. It considered it safer to detain an innocent who might be suspected of being associated with a militant group and subsequently release him, than to give the suspect the benefit of the doubt. In many cases those that had been detained and were subsequently released emerged more sympathetic to the militants' cause. The government also secretly organized a system of informers which it used to identify suspects. Finally confessions and information were extracted by torture (Al-Ahram, 3-9 February 1994).

In addition to the above, the government passed a new legislation in an effort to combat the militants. In 1992 the government passed a Law for Combating Terrorism (Law No.97). The legislation allowed the state to outlaw organizations deemed to advocate violating the constitution. Critics of the law have said that it would muzzle the press, inhibit freedom of association and confiscate freedom of expression. In the words of an independent legislator, Kamal Khaled: 'if somebody advocates the application of Shari'a, or views Islam as both state and religion they can be imprisoned and tortured for their views' (Mideast Mirror, 16 July 1992).

The law also changed the penal code. The death penalty could now be imposed for membership of a terrorist organization, and for supplying money, weapons or information to any such group. Human Rights groups feared that this

law would permit political activities to be treated as acts of terrorism. Furthermore, in the absence of any internationally agreed definition of terrorism, the term could be widely interpreted, leading to more prisoners of conscience and a marked increase in the number of people executed for political reasons (Cairo Today, November:1993).

Repression, however, could not prevent the further increase of political violence in the country. Throughout the 1990s, the regime faced strong domestic challenges which undoubtedly led it to pursue more repressive policies at the level of both legislation and political practice. (In the political practice, the government banned the students activities organized by Jama'at al-Islamiyya in the universities, the appointment of government preachers (from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments) to mosques, restrictions on the appointment of Muslim Brotherhood candidates to head professional syndicates, and the decision to appoint rather than elect the mayors ('umad) of Upper Egypt's 4,000 villages.) In its campaign to eradicate the Islamic groups, the government believed it reached a turning point with the shooting of Talat Yasin Hamman, a key figure of al-Jama'a, in April 1994 (and of his successor, Ahmad Hasan Abdel Galil, in November). By tracking them down, the security forces claimed to have gained a great deal of information about al-Jama'a and claimed to have penetrated the group. However it is believed that as the state continues to stifle all political dissent, these resistant groups are likely to feel more justified than ever in carrying out acts of violence against the state.

( Today the government is targeting to check the gradual and moderate spread of Islam by the Muslim Brotherhood for what its claims is its ideological

inspiration of the militant groups; it points to the Brotherhood's 'fundamentalist thought' (fikir usuli) in its use of the writings of Ibn Taymiyya<sup>74</sup> and Sayyid Qutb.)

However from the point of view of the analysis the relationship between the government and the Islamists needs to be seen in relation to individual groups as well as in terms of the government's overall policy toward the Islamist challenge. The government in the recent years has frequently pursued a policy of suppression over one of accommodation in its belief that it can suppress the problem over time through strict security measures and an improvement in the economic situation. This choice though seems to be effective, reflects a lack of commitment to political liberalization, a rejection of an alternative ideological trend in the political process (something of which the Islamists themselves are frequently accused), as well as the manifest inability of the Islamists to force change on the regime.

In the economic field, Egypt has not been as successful as hoped for. The economic disintegration that has continued since 1985 is the primary reason behind Egypt's current domestic instability, arguably manifestations of severe economic dislocation such as inflation, unemployment, overpopulation, inadequacy of transportation, housing, education and health services. This is the problem that fuels the rise in public unrest and eventually to the rise in anti-government violence. Thus it is important for domestic security and regime

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74. Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) was a medieval theologian of the Hanbali school who issued a fatwa ruling that the Muslim Mongol rulers in Mardin (Modern Turkey) were not to be considered Muslims because they applied a mixture of Shari'a and Mongol laws (the Yasa). Islamists draw parallels with modern governments that only partially apply the Shari'a.



stability that the government pay urgent and greater attention to economic problems.

The general economic context of relations between the state and the Islamists however also needs to be set against the background of economic liberalization (*infitah*) began during the Sadat period. Economic Liberalization is generally viewed, on a popular level, as responsible for the increased disparity between rich and poor.<sup>75</sup> This policy of Economic Liberalization however produced a class of entrepreneurs specially those benefited from the new economic climate and established rapidly expanding businesses. These included a category of "Islamic investment" specialists whose investment companies (*Sharikat tawzif al-amwal*), developed in the 1980s, attracted the public by offering unusually high rates of return (typically 20 to 30 percent) while insisting that their funds were invested in accordance with Islamic principles. The early success of these companies benefited Islamists, mainly because they made financial contributions supporting Islamist candidates for parliament and helped fund Islamic publications. However, their collapse (many appear to have been money pyramids) and the subsequent loss of investors' money, amidst allegations of corruption against some of the major companies, such as al-Rayyan, al-Saad, and al-Sharif, was exploited by the government to taint Islamists in general with

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75. According to one of the most comprehensive and methodologically sound studies of diachronic changes in private consumption, poverty increased significantly between the fiscal years 1981-1982 and 1990-1991. In rural Egypt, the percentage of the poor rose from 16.1 to 28.6 percent of the total population over that period of time; while in urban areas it rose from 18.2 to 20.3 percent. Applying a higher poverty line, including those deemed moderately poor, the percentage rose from 26.9 in 1981-1982 to 39.2 percent in rural areas and from 33.5 to 39 percent in urban ones. In terms of expenditure deciles, the bottom 80 percent of Egyptian society feared worse than previously, and only the top 20 percent feared better (Kienly, Spring 1988:232).

corruption.

These investment companies flourished in an unregulated market, and the government's moves against them were partly motivated by the wish to protect private investors. The government is also motivated, however, by the desire to quell the growing contradiction, pointed out by U.S. commercial bankers, between the mounting debt of the Egyptian government and the vast sums deposited in the commercial banks as a result of profits accumulated by investors in these companies (Zubaida, 1990:156). Despite their eventual failure, the investment companies still reflect the appeal of combining Islam with finance primarily for profit but also for religious legitimization.

The economic situation in Egypt however remains fragile and the government is under constant strain to please entrepreneurs who have supported the system as well as to improve the general living standards of Egyptians in the hope of stemming the appeal of the Islamists. But on the other hand despite their repeated criticism of the economic policies of the government along with others, one of the main weakness of the Islamists is, however, their inability to place the economy at the top of their agenda and provide a clear economic programme of reform and development. Thus, the public lacks hope and confidence in those who are meant to provide an alternative. It is because of Egypt's overwhelming economic reliance on U.S. aid, and the fear that the assumption of power by Islamists would jeopardize existing U.S.-Egyptian relations, that the regime continues to have an advantage. Although an improvement in the economic situation at present might temporarily strengthen the hand of the regime, it is unlikely to quell the demand for greater accountability and further Islamization not

only by the deprived or marginalized in society, but also by many urban middle-class elements. Despite a degree of convergence between secularists and Islamist opposed to the government over certain political issues such as the rule of law, the Arab-Israeli peace process, the Gulf War, and Bosnia, Islamists nevertheless tend to interpret contemporary political challenges involving Muslims as being directed at them specifically because they are Muslims. Part of the ideological challenge facing the Egyptian state is the emergence in society of the search for an alternative identity based exclusively on Islam. This identity is presented by Islamists as being better equipped to defend Muslims, as was the case, they argue, historically.

However there has been no clear articulation by the Islamists of Egypt's role regionally and internationally, beyond a general notion about the need for unity between Muslim states in order to promote greater justice for Arabs and Muslims. Islamists and members of the public generally believe that it is not the Muslims who are anti-Western, but the West, and at present, particularly, the United States, that is undermining the development of Muslim states. The state, for its part, seeks to pursue growth and development through closer political and economic cooperation with the West as well as with Israel. It is this later vision that represents a regional trend that is being supported politically and partly financially by the United States and the European Union. The state has presented it as forming a new overarching economic and political reality that will undermine Islamist trend. Although this view of an alternative had gained momentum with the peace process, it is greatly undermined by a legacy of economic failure and

corruption associated with the regime, disillusionment with the political process, and the ideological alternative being offered by the Islamists.

There is growing polarization between the increasing number of Egyptians who are seeking a more 'Islamic friendly' society in which to live that would not contradict their religious values and those who want to maintain and promote a less religiously oriented society. In today's Egypt, the moderate interpretation of Islam is what was once considered extreme, and there has been a shift in corresponding notions of what constitutes "moderate" and "extreme". Such classifications have different features at different times and therefore need to be constantly reviewed in order to assess what they represent at a particular period. This ideological and political debate poses a challenge in Mubarak's government and eventually brings with it two options: accommodation of its opponents or a continuation of its present policy of control and containment, both of which are unlikely to stem the demand for greater Islamization of state and society.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Egypt in Search of Political Community**

Egypt is at the crossroads of divergent political interest, each seeking its own empowerment. Islamist movements seek to shift Egypt's political culture toward an Islamic solution. The various Islamist movements, however, each define that "solution" somewhat differently. Other segments within the population seek a greater voice in the affairs of state through democratization for Egypt's political future. Although these two political interests share some views, belief concerning sectarian versus secular political leadership often separate them. The ruling elites of Egypt's multiparty autocracy seek to retain their own power and wealth in spite of the interests of these groups. They are content to use coercion, containment, or repression to ensure their position remain intact. The relationship between these coexistent and conflict interests form a political model, the dynamics of which illustrate how they not only counterbalance each other, but also make predicting the results of their interaction possible.

Thus for Egypt, the twentieth century was almost a complete failure. Despite of the competing political interest, the country is still in the midst of a comprehensive crisis which has led to a confusion about its very identity, future choices and destiny. Its poor achievements in the economic and social fields forces Egypt to reflect on the causes of protracted failure and accordingly on the nature of the society that it aspires to create. The politics of frustration and the search for meaning and self-fulfillment are rooted in the nexus of interactions with the West since the beginning of the colonial age. Indeed, politics is another area of reversals and fundamental failures. The country started its long road to

democracy with the opening of a pseudo parliament in 1866. By 1923 it had a liberal democratic constitution.

The Liberal period of government that followed in the twentieth century allowed many groups to be channeled through political parties to be debated within parliament or without parliament in the free press of the day. The function of the new politicians was to relay the discontent of the masses, or their needs, to the ruling institutions, of which they formed a basic element. Although the high ulama tried to play a role in that system of government, especially the rector of al-Azhar, the rest of the religious establishment had taken a back seat for over century and were no longer able to direct affairs of government. Their previous fluid roles as ubiquitous fillers of political, social and economic vacuums were now filled by bureaucrats, administrators and the new breed of politicians and journalists. This group only made the motions of appealing to the electorate; in fact, the electorate was most frequently manipulated and gulled by them.

A decade of liberal experimentation in government, which was supposed to grant Egypt independence from the British presence, soon showed its inability to accomplish that goal. The emerging educated middle class Egyptians failed to see that the liberal period was an experiment that had been pre-judged from the beginning and had been so geared by the King and the British forces of occupation that it could only have a limited liberal approach. These Egyptian damned all liberal governments as ultimately doomed to failure. In their search for alternatives some of these groups adopted other western ideologies: communism, socialism, fascism. Others less kindly disposed towards western ideologies, or less knowledgeable, eschewed anything derived from outside their own indigenous

culture, and determined that the future salvation of the country and its people lay in an inward looking movement, in a return to Islamic principles of morality. Thus the failure of the liberal experiment in the 1930 gave rise to other ideological solutions and spurred a reawakening of public religious sentiments. These were in part channeled to non-formal, popular organization – most prominently the Muslim Brotherhood that offered its own set of total answers to realities.

The founder, Hasan al-Banna was convinced that only negative currents could come from the West, that Europeans were bent on westernizing Egypt – the better to dominate the country. He saw around him a class of bureaucrats who were western trained and educated, who imitated the manners and the customs of the West and allowed their women to do so, who spoke foreign tongues and adopted foreign laws. New laws based on western system had been introduced into Egypt with the British occupation; they had little to do with the Islamic law (Shari'a), although there was an attempt to claim that they were in conformity with the spirit of the Shari'a. Many of the new laws had caused hardship among the population, which could neither understand the letter of the law nor grasp its ramifications.

Having lived in Ismailiyya, al-Banna experienced more closely the negative aspect of the European domination of Egypt than the rest of his compatriots, for Ismailiyya was a European enclave next to an Egyptian slum whose inhabitants catered to the creature comforts of the enclave.

Had the westernizing political currents improved the lot of the Egyptian, or economic depression not appeared on the steps of the liberal experiment, there may never have been such a movement of repudiation of the

West. But the two came together, and simple cause and effect attributed the sorry economic condition of the country to its exploitation by the West.

The Muslim Brothers, while not having a well planned political program - contenting themselves with vague generalities about Muslim government and a Muslim polity – had an effective social and economic program, one which won them numerous adherents in the late 1940s. The Brothers with their Islamic antecedent and ideas filled the need in a society which was going through a depression as well as a period of transition. That explains their membership, which grew rapidly, as did the group who sympathized with their aims and principles but did not become active members of the association. The membership, which came overwhelmingly from among the poorer classes, also cut across class lines and counted among its adherents many westernized folk who were dissatisfied with the government, and with what they saw as a palpable loss of identity in their society as a result of Westernization and foreign occupation. The search for roots, for authenticity led many to return to their past history, to the days when their rulers had been Muslims and acted according to Shari'a.

The movement of the Muslim Brothers did achieve a limited political success. It mobilized large masses of people, carried out several successful economic enterprises and gained a standing and a following among the urban population. This success however came to an end when the association started dabbling in politics and advocated the use of violence. A series of assassinations ended in the death of al-Banna himself, after which the movement was proscribed for a number of years and went underground. The organizational apparatus of the movement however was to be emulated by later groups. These were a secret



system of cells which operated independently of each other and which received orders directly from al-Banna himself. These were the groups that were in charge of acts of violence.

The military revolt of 1952 however supplied an option to Egyptian society and allowed for alternative means of protesting abuse on the part of the government. A wave of hope swept across the country that a new regime was in the offing and that radical reforms would be carried out. Nasser pitched his appeal to the dispossessed classes, the fallahin (farmers) and the industrial workers, and deliberately sought to gain them as adherents to his regime, and in this he was successful. Land reform and industrialization were the means used to change social structures. Much capital was, however, wasted on hasty schemes that failed; much was lost to corruption and inefficiency, and much was lost to armament. The outcome was an increased indebtedness to the Eastern bloc and dependence on them. The defeat of 1967 spelled the beginning of an end of Nasser's socialist approach, even though he continued to rule until his death in 1970.

The advent of Sadat heralded another new beginning, one that harked back to the liberal age and claimed to end repression, and institute freedom of speech and freedom of the press. So long as people are made to feel that there is a channel – recognized and attainable – for forwarding their voices, violent means are eschewed as unnecessary. Sadat's early days led people to believe they would be heard, and the government would be responsive. However, the new open-door economic policies, *infitah*, soon showed that the rich could be heard louder, and the riots of January 1977 occurred. These riots were dangerous signs and showed

that the body politic was weakening, but unfortunately they went unheeded and distorted.

Having encouraged the emergence and growth of Islamic political elements, Sadat found himself unable to control them. The Islamic jama'at and the Muslim Brotherhood grew increasingly critical of Sadat's foreign (rapprochement with the United States, peace with Israel) and domestic (economic conditions, inadequate democratization, deviation from Islam) policy as the 1970s progressed. Further more, these groups expanded in size and popular support. The circulation of al-Da'wa, al-I'tisam and other religious publications increased steadily. After 1975, the university – based Islamic jama'at won massive victories in student union elections. In 1978, for example, its candidates won 210 out of 218 seats in Alexandria University's Faculties of Medicine, Engineering, Law and Pharmacy. These criticisms and popular electoral gains were viewed with alarm by Sadat, particularly in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution.

The Camp David meeting and the resulting fiasco of the 'peace' talks brought further disillusionment, inflation, and repression as Sadat refused to listen to internal criticism and geared himself to respond to international adulation rather than internal demands. To frustrate his political opposition, which he described as either Nasserite, communists, or paid agents of foreign governments (they were neither of the three but were normal responses to government actions, the opposition that arises in every society), he roused the Muslim Brotherhood to action. He turned them into the 'loyal opposition', allowing their newspapers to flourish, consulting them on many matters, and using them as a foil to the rest of the political elements in the country to the extent of referring to them as political

groups. But the Muslim Brotherhood were not easily manipulated by Sadat or his government. They soon turned their criticism toward him, his policy of excessive Westernization, and his excessive reliance on the United States in foreign affairs. History repeated itself, and the same discontent with the West, its economics, and ideology that had existed in the 1930s surfaced again in the 1970s and 1980s for different reasons. Government policies the Brotherhood disapproved of were attributed to western pressures on the Egyptian regime, so that in rejecting the policies, they also rejected the regime for bowing to them.

Religious activism was not created by the Sadat regime, although it grew during that period of time. It had first appeared under Nasser as a response to the War of 1967 revived the fortunes of militant Islamic groups. Reconstituting themselves out of the incarcerated remnants of the Muslim Brothers, these surfaced as extremist violent militants in the 1970s. Aided by circumstances of worsening economic and social conditions in the country and a wide-spread disaffection of a new generation with state discredited shibboleths of radical Arab — nationalism and other ‘secular’ ideologies, they, in their bid were determined to seek power by openly embracing terrorism against the state.

As political problems were exacerbated during Sadat’s regime, solutions seemed farther off than ever, and as economic problems increased, more and more people began to despair of the ability of the regime to do much about anything. More people turned to religion, this time not only out of piety, but also hoping to find an answer to practical matters of politics and economics. The Brothers who had been encouraged by the government to speak out freely began to discuss matters of public interest. Where other channels for communication were

closed off to the public, Muslim newspapers proliferated, attracting people who were not necessarily drawn to them by the religious content so much as by the fact that the paper was an open channel for communication. Where open discussion of public wrongs was met by government repression, discussion of the same wrongs when couched in religious symbolism, or using historical characters from the past, served to convey the message without the retaliation of the government forces. Further by encouraging the Brothers the Sadat regime probably issued a signal of which it was not aware of: that opposition would be permitted through the channel of religion.

The traditional high ulama tried to lead the religious current but failed, for they had become government employees and their neutrality was suspect. The role of religious leader devolved on new, socially mobilized groups, on the leaders of the Brothers, but even more on the leaders of new militant groups that appeared overnight. These Islamic militant groups, the jama'at, had no connection with the Brothers except that they spoke in a Muslim idiom, and preached a return to the Shari'a and to social justice. The new groups varied in approach with each organization. Some regarded all those who had not joined them as heretics, kuffar, to be exterminated. Others, more moderate, believed that all government was composed of tyrants and oppressors so long as it did not follow the shari'a.

Some of the groups believed in the use of violence and in the need to overthrow government and kill the originators of tyranny. Among the later group were the men who assassinated Sadat. Others believed in a gradual change of government as people came to learn more about their religion and shari'a as a

ways of doing things. Because these groups are disparate and loosely organized their numbers however can only be guessed at, and their influence is equally unknown.

The social base of the state under Sadat was undoubtedly narrower than it had been under Nasser. In some ways, however, it was more solid. It rested on the hard-core support of the most strategic social force, the bourgeoisie, which had a major stake in its survival, and it at least partially incorporated elements of the opposition through the party/interest group structure created under limited liberalization. Yet, although the parties' articulated interests, they did not, as in strong party systems, incorporate a large mobilized public or the interests of the masses into the making of public policies. There was still an institutional gap between public wishes and policy outcomes; decisions, still made in limited elite circles, therefore enjoyed too little societal support. Moreover, the regime also lacked the ideological legitimacy to win the loyalty of the masses.

Under Mubarak, however, democratization became the main legitimacy formula. Nevertheless, it was limited. The masses were held not to be prepared for full-blown democracy, lacking sufficient responsibility and consciousness, they were susceptible to 'alien' (leftist) or 'Islamist' ideas. Strong presidential tutelage, the careful channeling of political discourse through regime-managed institutions, and limits on overt attempts to incite the masses was needed for the sake of social peace. By the Mubarak era, this new conservative consensus seemed to bind the elite, affecting ideological divisions.

By the middle of the 1980s, as economic expansion gave way to austerity, the challenge of mass control became ever more burdensome for the

regime. The limits of the regime's capacity to incorporate dissident factions left the door open to the rise of a counter-elite in the form of Islamic movement, and the regime had to continue to rely on coercion and repression to stave off dissent and rebellion.

The Islamic mainstream, possessed of increasing cohesion, organization, and mobilizational capability, rapidly took advantage of the legitimate channels of activity opened by the regime under Mubarak. The mainstream Muslim Brotherhood and its conservative groups were incorporated into parliament; they infiltrated the parties, the judiciary, and the press; and generally put secular forces on the defensive. The more the secular opposition proved impotent to wrest a share of power from the regime, the more dissidents seemed to turn to political Islam as the only viable alternative. A dramatic indicator of this was the substantial representation Islamists won in the professional syndicates, especially the doctors' union, traditionally bastions of the liberal, upper-middle class; only the lawyers' and journalists' unions resisted their way. Victories indicative of Islamic influence included by the reversal of Sadat's law of personal status that gave women some modest right, a decision by certain state companies to cease hiring women so they could take their 'proper place in the home, and a constitutional amendment making Shari'a the sole basis of legislation'.

Thus for the regime(s) when the extent control mechanisms are proved inadequate, the only role remains is coercion and repression in the political system. Under Nasser coercive controls were very tight although largely directed at the upper class and limited numbers of middle-class opposition activists. Sadat

initially relaxed controls, particularly over the bourgeoisie, but when opposition became too insistent, he did not hesitate to repress it. His massive 1981 purge showed how quickly the regime could change from conciliation to repression. Under the more tolerant Mubarak regime, political freedoms are still unequally enjoyed. Dissent within regime institutions is tolerated, but when it crossed the line into mass action – such as Islamic street demonstrations for implementation of Shari'a and anti-Israeli protests – it is regularly repressed. Strikes are also regularly smashed with the use of force. The regime continued to round up leftist and Islamic dissidents, charging them with belonging to illegal organizations or spreading anti-government propaganda, apparently part of a strategy to keep dissent with manageable bounds.

Moreover, the government paralyzed the working of the professional organizations and student unions. It got rid of the Brother's representation in parliament by arresting those most likely to stand in the 1995 elections.

Thus in the present, critics of the government do not have many channels of expression. However, influential voices that sometimes differ from the government's position occasionally find an outlet in Egypt's government-controlled press and more often in the Western press. Most critics and opposition parties agree that the use of violence by the militants must be confronted. However, many believe in a national dialogue which includes the Muslim Brotherhood. They argue that allowing the Brotherhood to play a role in the political process will more effectively isolate the Gama'a al-Islamiyya than a crude and all-embracing policy of confrontation. Mohamed Heikal, a former advisor to Anwar Sadat and a highly respected journalist writes about the

inadequacy of confronting violence with violence and calls for political action to counter the Islamist challenge (Al-Ahram Weekly, 3-9 February 1998). Salama Ahmed Salama, a columnist for Al-Ahram newspaper, urges the government to avoid all out war with the militants and talks of giving people 'fresh hope of change'. Even General Fouad Allam, a senior figure in the interior ministry, has spoken of the need to reconsider the belief that extremist thought should only be confronted with arms (Observer, 14 March 1998).

Egypt has always been a deeply conservative and religious society. Islam has played a key role in molding modern Egyptian culture. However, militant Islam has not been able to attract mass support in Egypt. On several occasion, the militants have tried to exploit grievances to gain widespread popular support but to no avail. Although the mass arrests and blanket policing of militant strongholds have, for the moment, contained the militant threat. The strong government crackdown seems to have succeeded in taking most of the sting out of the Gama'a al-Islamiyya in Cairo. However, it is clear that the militants remain strong in their main power-base in and around Assuit. If the militants have, to a degree, been contained the Egyptian government should not assume that the broader fundamentalist challenge has been overcome.

If most Egyptians feel alienated by the militants campaign of violence there is no evidence to suggest genuine popular support for the regime of President Husni Mubarak. One can conclude however that Egypt is still, despite pretensions to democracy, a one-party state. The ruling National Democratic Party of Mubarak has no popular roots. Nor do the official opposition parties. The people feel they cannot influence their rulers, let alone change them. Popular



dissatisfaction with the political status quo is fuelled by the economic crisis. Mass unemployment, a population growing at an insupportable rate and desperately poor living conditions all help to inflame the tensions. The only party that can claim genuine popularity is the long-established Muslim Brotherhood which has successfully escaped identification with the militant violence in the eyes of the Egyptian public. The Brotherhood offers its supporters a form of political legitimacy. Their demand for an Islamic polity based on strict interpretation of Islamic law has exposed the moral bankruptcy at the heart of the Mubarak regime. A series of corruption scandals implicating senior government officials has added to the feeling that Egypt is controlled by a self-serving elite. To those already in power there is no difference between moderate and extreme Islamists. All of them want to establish an Islamic government with a specifically Islamic agenda – only the means to the end differ. The precise extent of support for the Brotherhood is difficult to measure. They have not attempted to spell out an economic or political alternative but, their simple message – ‘Islam is the solution’ – seems to be attractive to many. Given the extent of Egypt’s social and economic problems the chances of undermining the appeal of the Brotherhood are slim. Egypt is in need of massive economic and structural reform and a genuine democratic experiment. Thus in this present circumstances without rapid and wholesale reform Egypt’s record of relative stability since independence could be seriously threatened.

## **Appendix**

### **Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt (Some important Articles)**

#### **PART ONE**

#### **THE STATE**

##### **Article 1**

The Arab Republic of Egypt is a democratic, socialist State based on the alliance of the working forces of the people.

The Egyptian people are part of the Arab nation and work for the realization of its comprehensive unity.

##### **Article 2**

Islam is the religion of the State and Arabic its official language. Islamic jurisprudence is the principal source legislation.

##### **Article 3**

Sovereignty is for the people alone and they are the source of authority. The people shall exercise and protect this sovereignty, and safeguard national unity in the manner specified in the Constitution.

#### Article 4

The economic foundation of the Arab Republic of Egypt is a socialist democratic system based on sufficiency and justice in a manner preventing exploitation, conducive to liquidation of income differences, protecting legitimate earnings, and guaranteeing the equity of the distribution of public duties and responsibilities.

#### Article 5

The political system of the Arab Republic of Egypt is a multi-party one, within the framework of the basic elements and principles of the Egyptian society as stipulated in the Constitution (Political parties are regulated by law).

#### Article 6

The Egyptian nationality is defined by the law.

### **PART TWO**

#### **BASIC CONSTITUENTS OF THE SOCIETY**

##### **Social and Moral Constituents**

#### Article 7

Social solidarity is the basis of the society.

#### Article 8

The State shall guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens.

#### Article 9

The family is the basis of the society founded on religion, morality and patriotism.

The State is keen to preserve the genuine character of the Egyptian family – with what it embodies of values and traditions while affirming and developing this character in the relations within the Egyptian society.

#### Article 12

The society shall be committed to safeguarding and protecting morals, promoting the genuine Egyptian traditions and abiding by the high standards of religious education, moral and national values, historical heritage of the people, scientific facts, socialist conduct and public morality within the limits of the law.

The State is committed to abiding by these principles and promoting them.

#### Article 13

Work is a right, a duty and an honour ensured by the State. Workers who excel in their field of work shall receive the appreciation of the State and the society.

No work shall be imposed on the citizens, except by virtue of the law, for the performance of a public service and in return for a fair remuneration.

#### Article 14

Public offices are the right of all citizens and an assignment for their occupants in the service of the people. The State guarantees their (the occupants) *protection and the performance of their duties in safeguarding the interests of the people*. They may not be dismissed by other than disciplinary way, except in the cases specified by the law.

#### Article 15

The war veterans, those injured in war or because of it, and the wives and children of those killed shall have priority in work opportunities according to the law.

#### Article 16

The State shall guarantee cultural, social and health services, and work to ensure them for the villages in particular in an easy and regular manner in order to raise their standard.

#### Article 17

The State shall guarantee social and health insurance services and all the citizens have the right to pensions in cases of incapacity, unemployment and old-age, in accordance with the law.

### Article 19

Religious education shall be a principal subject in the course of general education.

## **Economic Constituents**

### Article 23

The national economy shall be organized in accordance with a comprehensive development plan which ensures raising the national income, fair distribution, raising the standard of living, eliminating unemployment, increasing work opportunities, connecting wages with production, fixing a minimum and a maximum limit for wages in a manner which guarantees lessening the disparities between incomes.

### Article 24

The people shall control all the means of production and direct their surplus in accordance with the development plan laid down by the State.

### Article 25

Every citizen shall have a share in the national revenue to be defined by the law in accordance with his work or his unexploiting ownership.

### Article 26

The workers shall have a share in the management and profits of the projects. They are committed to the development

## **PART THREE**

### **PUBLIC FREEDOMS, RIGHTS AND DUTIES**

#### Article 40

All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination between them due to race, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed.

#### Article 41

Individual freedom is a natural right and shall not be touched. Except in case of flagrante delicto no person may be arrested, inspected, detained or his freedom restricted or prevented from free movement except by an order necessitated by investigations and preservation of the security of the society. This order shall be given by the competent judge or the Public Prosecution in accordance with the provisions of the law. The law shall determine the period of custody.

#### Article 42

Any person arrested, detained or his freedom restricted shall be treated in the manner concomitant with the preservation of his dignity. No physical or moral harm is to be inflicted upon him. He may not be detained or imprisoned except in places defined by laws organizing prisons.

If a confession is proved to have been made by a person under any of the aforementioned forms of duress or coercion, it shall be considered invalid and futile.

#### Article 46

The State shall guarantee the freedom of belief and the freedom of practice of religious rites.

#### Article 47

Freedom of opinion is guaranteed. Every individual has the right to express his opinion and to publicize it verbally or in writing or by photography or by other means within the limits of the law. Self-criticism and constructive criticism is the guarantee for the safety of the national structure.

#### Article 48

Freedom of the press, printing, publication and mass media shall be guaranteed. Censorship on newspapers is forbidden as well as notifying, suspending or canceling them by administrative methods. In a state of emergency or in time of war a limited censorship may be imposed on the newspapers,



publications and mass media in matters related to public safety or purposes of national security in accordance with the law.

#### Article 54

Citizens shall have the right to peaceable and unarmed private assembly, without the need for prior notice. Security men should not attend these private meetings.

Public meetings, processions and gatherings are allowed within the limits of the law.

#### Article 55

Citizens shall have the right to form societies as defined in the law. The establishment of societies whose activities are hostile to the social system, clandestine or have a military character is prohibited.

#### Article 56

The creation of syndicates and unions on a democratic basis is a right guaranteed by law, and should have a moral entity.

The law regulates the participation of syndicates and unions in carrying out the social programmes and plans, raising the standard of efficiency, consolidating the socialist behaviour among their members, and safeguarding their funds.

They are responsible for questioning their members about their behaviour in exercising their activities according to certain codes of morals, and for defending the rights and liberties of their members as defined in the law.

#### Article 57

Any assault on individual freedom or on the inviolability of private life of citizens and any other public rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and the law shall be considered a crime, whose criminal and civil lawsuit is not liable to prescription. The State shall grant a fair compensation to the victim of such an assault.

#### Article 62

Citizens shall have the right to vote, nominate and express their opinions in referendums according to the provisions of the law. Their participation in public life is a national duty.

#### Article 63

Every individual has the right to address public authorities in writing and with his own signature. Addressing public authorities should not be in the name of groups, with the exception of disciplinary organs and moral personalities.

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## Sayyid Qutbb

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY AND THE CORRECT METHOD OF ITS FORMATION

The message of Islam brought by the Messenger of God, Muhammad – peace be on him – was the last link in the long chain of invitations toward God by the noble Prophets. Throughout history, this message has remained the same: that human beings should recognize that their true Sustainer and Lord is One God, that they should submit to Him alone, and that the lordship of man be eliminated. Except for a few people here and there in history, mankind as a whole has never denied the existence of God and His sovereignty over the universe; it has rather erred in comprehending the real attributes of God, or in taking other gods besides God as His associates. This association with God has been either in belief and worship, or in accepting the sovereignty of others besides God. Both of these aspects are Shirk in the sense that they take human beings away from the religion of God, which was brought by the Prophets. After each Prophet, there was a period during which people understood this religion, but then gradually later generations forgot it and returned to Jahiliyyah. They started again on the way of Shirk, sometimes in their belief and worship and sometimes in their submission to the authority of others, and sometimes in both.

Jahiliyyah, on the other hand, is one man's lordship over another, and in this respect it is against the system of the universe and brings the involuntary

aspect of human life into conflict with its voluntary aspect. This was that Jahiliyyah which confronted every Prophet of God. Including the last Prophet – peace be on him – in their call toward submission to One God. This Jahiliyyah is not an abstract theory; in fact, under certain circumstances it has no theory at all. It always takes the form of a living movement in a society which has its own leadership, its own concepts and values, and its own traditions, habits and feelings. It is an organized society and there is a close cooperation and loyalty between its individuals, and it is always ready and alive to defend its existence consciously or unconsciously. It crushes all elements which seem to be dangerous to its personality.

When Jahiliyyah takes the form, not of a ‘theory’ but of an active movement in this fashion, then any attempt to abolish this Jahiliyyah and to bring people back to God which presents Islam merely as a ‘theory’ will be undesirable, rather useless. Jahiliyyah controls the practical world, and for its support there is a living and active organization. In this situation, mere theoretical efforts to fight it cannot even be equal, much less superior, to it. When the purpose is to abolish the existing system and to replace it with a new system which in its character, principles and all its general and particular aspects, is different from the controlling jahili system, then it stands to reason that this new system should also come into the battlefield as an organized movement and a viable group. It should come into the battlefield with a determination that its strategy, its social organization, and the relationship between its individuals should be firmer and more powerful than the existing jahili system.

The theoretical foundation of Islam, in every period of history, has been to witness 'La ilaha illa Allah' – 'There is no deity except God' – which means to bear witness that the only true deity is God, that He is the Sustainer, that He is the Ruler of the universe, and that He is real Sovereign; to believe in Him in the heart, to worship Him alone, and to put into practice His laws. Without this complete acceptance of 'La ilaha illa Allah'. Which differentiates the one who says he is a Muslim from a non-Muslim, there cannot be any practical significance to this utterance, nor will it have any weight according to the Islamic law.

Theoretically, to establish it means that people should devote their entire lives in submission to Allah and should not decide any affair on their own, but must refer to God's injunctions concerning it and follow them. We know of Allah's guidance through only one source, that is, through the Messenger of Allah – peace be on him. Thus, in the second part of the Islamic deed, we bear witness 'Wa ashhadu anna Muhammadar Rasul Allah' – 'And I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God'.

It is therefore necessary that Islam's theoretical foundation – the belief – materialize in the form of an organized and active group from the very beginning. It is necessary that this group separate itself from the jahili society, becoming independent and distinct from the active and organized jahili society whose aim is to block Islam. The center of this new group should be a new leadership, the leadership which first came in the person of the Prophet – peace be on him – himself, and after him was delegated to those who strove for bringing people back to God's sovereignty, His authority and His laws. A person who bears witness that there is no deity except God and that Muhammad is God's

Messenger should cut off his relationship of loyalty from the jahili society, which he has forsaken, and from jahili leadership, whether it be in the guise of priests, magicians or astrologers, or in the form of political, social or economic leadership, as was the case of the Quraish in the time of the Prophet – peace be on him. He will have to give his complete loyalty to the new Islamic movement and to the Muslim leadership.

This decisive step must be taken at the very moment a person says, ‘La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadar Rasul Allah’, with his tongue. The Muslim society cannot come into existence without this. It cannot come into existence simply as a creed in the hearts of individual Muslims, however numerous they may be, unless they become an active, harmonious and cooperative group, distinct by itself, whose different elements, like the limbs of a human body, work together for its formation, its strengthening, its expansion, and for its defense against all those elements which attack its system, working under a leadership which is independent of the jahili leadership, which organizes its various efforts into one harmonious purpose, and which prepares for the strengthening and widening of their Islamic character and directs them to abolish the influences of their opponent, the jahili life.

Islam was founded in this manner. It was founded on a creed which, although concise, included the whole of life. This creed immediately brought into action a viable and dynamic group of people who became independent and separate from the jahili society, immediately challenging it; it never came as an abstract theory devoid of practical existence. Similarly, in the future it can be brought about only in this manner. There is no other way for the revival of Islam

in the shade of Jahiliyyah, in whatever age or country it appears, except to follow its natural character and to develop it into a movement and an organic system.

When Islam, according to the method described above, founds a Muslim community on this basis, forms it into an active group, and makes this faith the sole basis for the relationship between the individuals of this group, its ultimate aim is to awaken the 'humanity of man', to develop it, to make it powerful and strong, and to make it the most dominant factor among all the aspects found in man's being. It seeks to implement this purpose through its teachings, its rules, its laws and injunctions.

Some human characteristics are common with those of animals, even with those of inorganic matter. This has misled the exponents of 'scientific Jahiliyyah' to consider man to be nothing more than an animal, or even than inorganic matter! But in spite of the characteristics which man shares with animals and inorganic matter, man possesses certain other characteristics which distinguish him and make him a unique creation. Even the exponents of 'scientific Ignorance' were forced to admit this, the evidence of observational facts choking them; but even then, their admission of this fact is neither sincere nor unequivocal.

In this respect the service rendered by Islam's pure way of life has produced concrete and valuable results. Islam based the Islamic society on the association of belief alone, instead of the low associations based on race and colour, language and country, regional and national interests. Instead of stressing those traits which are common to both man and animal, it promoted man's human qualities, nurtured them and made them the dominant factor. Among the concrete and brilliant results of this attitude was that the Islamic society became an open

and all inclusive community in which people of various races, nations, languages and colours were members, there remaining no trace of these low animalistic traits. The rivers of higher talents and various abilities of all races of mankind flowed into this vast ocean and mixed in it. Their intermingling gave rise to a high level of civilization in a very short span of time, dazzling the whole world, and compounding the essences of all the human capabilities, ideas and wisdom of that period, in spite of the fact that in those times travel was difficult and the means of communication were slow.

In this great Islamic society Arabs, Persians, Syrians, Egyptians, Moroccans, Turks, Chinese, Indians, Romans, Greeks, Indonesians, Africans were gathered together – in short, peoples of all nations and all races. Their various characteristics were united, and with mutual cooperation, harmony and unity they took part in the construction of the Islamic community and Islamic culture. This marvelous civilization was not an ‘Arabic civilization’, even for a single day; it was purely an ‘Islamic civilization’. It was never a ‘nationality’ but always a ‘community of belief’.

Thus they all came together on an equal footing in the relationship of love, with their minds set upon a single goal; thus they used their best abilities, developed the qualities of their race to the fullest, and brought the essence of their personal, national and historical experiences for the development of this one community, to which they all belonged on an equal footing and in which their common bond was through their relationship to their Sustainer. In this community their ‘humanity’ developed without any hindrance. These are characteristics



which were never achieved by any other group of people in the entire history of mankind!

The most distinguished and well-known society in ancient history is considered to be the Roman Empire. Peoples of various races, languages and temperaments came together in this society, but all this was not based on 'human relationship' nor was any sublime faith the uniting factor among them; rather their society was ordered on a class system, the class of 'nobles' and the class of 'slaves', throughout the Empire. Moreover, the Roman race – in general – had the leadership and the other races were considered its subjects. Hence this society could not achieve that height which was achieved by the Islamic society and did not bring those blessings which were brought by the Islamic society.

Various societies have also appeared in modern times. For example, consider the British Empire. It is like the Roman society to which it is an heir. It is based on national greed, in which the British nation has the leadership and exploits those colonies annexed by the Empire. The same is true of other European empires. The Spanish and Portuguese Empires in their times, and the French Empire, all are equal with respect to oppression and exploitation. Communism also wanted to establish a new type of society, demolishing the walls of race and colour, nation and geographical region, but it is not based on 'human relationship' but on a 'class system'. Thus the communist society is like the Roman society with a reversal of emphasis; there nobles had distinction, while here the proletariat has distinction. The underlying emotion of this class is hatred and envy of other classes. Such a selfish and vengeful society cannot but excite base emotions in its individuals. The very basis of it is laid down in exciting

animalistic characteristics, and in developing and strengthening them. Thus, in its view, the most fundamental needs of a human being are those which are common with the animals, that is, 'food, shelter and sex'. From its point of view, the whole of human history is nothing but a struggle for food!

Islam, then, is the only Divine way of life which brings out the noblest human characteristics, developing and using them for the construction of human society. Islam has remained unique in this respect to this day. Those who deviate from this system and want some other system, whether it be based on nationalism, colour and race, class struggle, or similar corrupt theories, are truly enemies of mankind! They do not want man to develop those noble characteristics which have been given to him by his Creator, nor do they wish to see a human society benefit from the harmonious blending of all those capabilities, experiences and characteristics which have been developed among the various races of mankind.

God Most High says about such people: 'Say: Shall We tell you who will be the greatest losers in their deeds? Those whose effort goes astray in the present life, while they think that they are doing good deeds. Those are they who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and the encounter with Him. Their works have failed, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall not assign to them any value. That is their recompense – Hell – for that they were unbelievers and took My signs and My Messengers in mockery' (18:103-106).

God Almighty speaks the truth.

**Nasser; Socialism**  
**The Charter of National Action**  
**(Mithaq Al-Amal Al-Watani)**  
**On the Inevitability of the Socialist Solution**

Socialism is the way to social freedom. Social freedom cannot be realised except through equal opportunity for every citizen to obtain a fair share of the national wealth.

This is not confined to the mere re-distribution of the national wealth among the citizens but foremost and above all it requires expanding the base of this national wealth, so as to accede to the lawful rights of the working masses. This means that socialism, with its two supports, sufficiency and justice, is the way to social freedom.

The socialist solution to the problem of economic and social underdevelopment in Egypt – with a view to achieving progress in a revolution was a historical inevitability imposed by reality, the broad aspirations of the masses and the changing nature of the world in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The capitalist experiments to achieve progress correlated closely with imperialism. The countries of the capitalist world reached the period of economic take-off on the basis of investments they made in their colonies. The wealth of India, of which British imperialism seized the largest share, was the beginning of the

formation of the British savings which were used in the development of agriculture and industry in Britain. If Britain has reached its take-off stage thanks to the Lancashire textile industry, the transformation of Egypt into a large field for cotton growing pumped the blood through the artery of British economy leaving the Egyptian peasant starved. Gone are the ages of imperialist piracy, when the peoples' wealth was looted to serve the interests of others with neither legal nor moral control. We should stamp out the remaining traces of those ages, especially in Africa.

Other experiments of progress realised their objectives at the expense of increasing the misery of the working people, either to serve the interests of capital or under pressure of ideological application which went to the extent of sacrificing whole living generations for the sake of others still unborn. The nature of the age no longer allows such things. Progress through looting or through the corvee system is no longer tolerable under the new human values. These human values put an end to colonialism and an end to the corvee system. Not only did they achieve this but they also expressed positively the spirit and the ideals of the age when, through science, those values introduced other methods of work for the sake of progress.

Scientific socialism is the suitable style for finding the right method leading to progress. No other method can definitely achieve the desired progress. Those who call for freedom of capital, imagining that to be the road to progress, are gravely mistaken.

In the countries forced to remain underdeveloped, capital in its natural development is no longer able to lead the economic drive at a time when the great capitalist monopolies in the advanced countries grew thanks to the exploitation of the sources of wealth in the colonies.

The huge development of world monopolies leaves only two ways for local capitalism in the countries aspiring to progress:

**First** – Local capitalism is no longer capable of competition without the customs protection paid for by the masses.

**Second** – The only hope left for local capitalism to develop is to relate itself to the movements of world monopolies, following in their footsteps, thus turning into a mere appendage and dragging the country to doom.

Moreover, the wide gap of underdevelopment which separates the advanced states and those trying to catch up no longer allows the method of progress to be left to destroy individual efforts motivated by mere selfish profit. These individual efforts are no longer capable

of facing the challenge. Facing the challenge calls for three conditions:

- (1) Assembling the national savings.
- (2) Putting all the experiences of modern science at the disposal of the exploitation of national savings.
- (3) Drafting a complete plan for production.

These are concerned with increasing the product. On the other hand, fair distribution calls for planning programmes for social action, programmes that enable the working masses to reap the benefits of economic action and create the welfare society to which they aspire and struggle to promote. Work aiming at expanding the base of national wealth can never be left to the haphazard ways of the exploiting private capital with its unruly tendencies. The redistribution of the surplus national work on the basis of justice can never be accomplished through voluntary efforts based on good intentions, however sincere they may be.

This places a definite conclusion before the will of the National Revolution, without the acceptance of which it cannot realise its objectives. This conclusion is the necessity for the people's control over all the tools of production and over directing the surplus according to a definite plan. This socialist

solution is the only way out to economic and social progress. It is the way to democracy in all its social and political forms.

The people's control over all the tools of production does not necessitate the nationalisation of all means of production or the abolition of private ownership – nor does it affect the legitimate right of inheritance based on it. Such control can be achieved in two ways:

**First** – The creation of a capable public sector that would lead progress in all domains and bear the main responsibility of the development plan.

**Second** – The existence of a private sector that would, without exploitation, participate in the development within the framework of the overall plan, provided that the people's control is exercised over both sectors.

This socialist solution is the only path where all elements participating in the process of production can meet, according to scientific rules capable of supplying society with all the energies enabling it to rebuild its life on the basis of a carefully studied and comprehensive plan.

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Efficient socialist planning is the sole method which guarantees the use of all national resources, be they material, natural

or human, in a practical, scientific and humane way aimed at realising the common good of the masses, and ensuring a life of prosperity for them. Efficient socialist planning is the guarantee for the sound exploitation of actually existing resources, or those which are latent or potential. At the same time, it is a guarantee for the continued distribution of fundamental services. It is also a guarantee for raising the standard of the services now offered. It is a guarantee for extending those services to the areas which had fallen victim to negligence and inefficiency which were the outcome of long deprivation imposed by the selfishness of the ruling classes who looked down upon the struggling people.

It follows, then, that planning must be a scientifically organised creative process that would meet the challenges facing our society. It is not a mere process of working out the possible; it is a process of achieving hope. Hence planning in our society is required to find out a solution to the difficult formula. In the solution of that difficult formula lies the material and human success of national action: How can we increase production and , at the same time, increase the consumption of goods and use of services? And this besides the constant increase of saving for the sake of new investments?

This difficult formula with its three vital branches requires the existence of a highly efficient organisation capable of mobilising



forces of production, raising their material and intellectual efficiency, and relating them to the production process. Such an organisation is required to be aware that the aim of production is to widen the scope of services and that services – in turn – are a driving force turning the wheels of production. The relation between services and production and their rapid, smooth running movement creates a sound national blood cycle vital to the life of the people wholly and individually. This organisation must depend on centralisation in planning and decentralisation in implementation, which ensures placing the plan's programmes in the hands of all the people.

Consequently, the major part of the plan should be shouldered by the public sector owned by the people as a whole. This does not only ensure the sound development of the production process along the set path of productivity, but is also just, since the public sector belongs to the people as a whole.

It was the national struggle of the masses that provided the nucleus of the public sector, through the people's determination to retrieve and nationalise the foreign monopolies, and restore them to their natural and legitimate place, namely to their ownership by the whole people. Even during the military fight against imperialism, that same national struggle added to the public sector all the British and French capital in Egypt – capital which was seized from the people at

the time of foreign privileges and at a time when national wealth was subjected to the looting of foreign adventures.

Moreover, in seeking social freedom and penetrating into the strongholds of class exploitation that national struggle was able to add to the public sector the major part of production equipment through the July 1961 laws and their deep revolutionary impact reflecting the will for overall change in Egypt.

Those gigantic steps which allowed the public sector to undertake the role of vanguard in the march towards progress drew clearcut lines imposed by national reality and a thorough study of the nation's circumstances, potentialities and aims.

Those lines and principles can be summed up as follows:

**First -** In the field of production in general: The major skeleton of the production operation such as the railways, roads, ports, airports, the sources of energy, the dams, means of sea, land and air transportation and other public services should be within the framework of public ownership.

**Second -** In the field of industry: The majority of the heavy, medium and mining industries should be part of public ownership. Although it is possible to allow private ownership in this domain, such private ownership should be controlled by the public sector owned by the people. Light industries must always be beyond

monopoly . Though this field is open to private ownership, the public sector must have a role enabling it to guide that industry to the people's interest.

**Third - In the field of trade:** Foreign trade must be under the people's full control. Thus al import trade must be within the framework of the public sector. Though it is incumbent upon private capital to participate in export trade, the public sector must have the main share in that field to preclude all possible fraudulency. In so far as a percentage could be set in that field, the public sector must be in charge of three quarters of exports, while encouraging the private sector to shoulder the responsibility of the remaining share.

The public sector must have a role in internal trade. The public sector should within the coming eight years – remaining period of the first overall development plan for doubling national income in ten years – be in charge of at least one quarter of the internal trade to prevent monopoly and expand the range of internal trade for private and cooperative activities. It should be understood, of course, that internal trade means service and distribution against reasonable profit which under no circumstances should reach the extent of exploitation.

**Fourth – In the field of finance:** Banks should be within the framework of public ownership. The role of capital is a national one and should not be left to speculation and adventure. In addition,

insurance companies should be within the same framework of public ownership for the protection of a major part of national saving and to ensure its sound orientation.

**Fifth** – In the domain of land: There should be a clear distinction between two kinds of private ownership – that which opens the gates to exploitation, and non-exploiting which does its share in the service of the national economy while serving the interests of the owners themselves.

Progress through socialism is a consolidation of the bases of sound democracy, the democracy of all the people. Progress in the political domain under capitalism – even if we imagined it possible in the present international conditions – can only mean a confirmation of the rule of the class, possessing and monopolising all interest. In this event, the returns would go to a small minority of the people who have so much money in excess that they squander it on various forms of wasteful luxury defying the deprivation of the majority. This sharpens the edge of the class strife and wipes out every hope for democratic evolution.

The political liberation of man cannot be achieved unless an end is put to every shackle of exploitation limiting his freedom. Socialism and democracy form the wings of freedom with which socialism can soar to the distant horizons aspired to by the masses.

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On 30 June 1962, the National Congress for Popular Forces, out of which the Arab Socialist Union was to emerge, approved the text of "The Charter of National Action"

## **Political Thought of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani**

With the political domination of Islamic countries by the West, the Muslims were faced with a new political ideology different from the medieval concepts of civilized government. The new states of the Western world were national states. This meant that the governments of these states were based not on the will of a single person and his advisers but upon the will of the majority of people living in a well-defined area. Nationality and democracy went hand in hand. Muslim thinkers and reformers had to define their position vis a vis these two concepts which were unknown in medieval times. Medieval governments were autocratic governments in which the people in general had no share. Their voice did not simply count. There was no organized public opinion. Freedom of expression and common interest in political matters was unknown in medieval times. All the new developments were welcomed by Muslim reformers and thinkers and no body thought of defending medieval autocracy. 'On the other hand, it was thought that the new system of political life was a resuscitation of the early Islamic way of life, when the community was ruled by elected caliphs, the people had the right to criticize their rulers and the power of the rulers was restricted by the laws of the Sharl'ah.

Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) expresses the characteristic mood of the times when he condemns one man rule. He says that a nation which does not have people of Hall and 'Aqd (people who loose and bind), which is not consulted in matters which affect its interests, whose will is incapable of influencing the direction of its affairs, which submits to one man whose will is law, who commands what he wills and does what he wills—such a community does not remain in one state. There are alternating periods of happiness and misery for it, of knowledge and ignorance, of riches and poverty, of honour and dishonour. The fact is that such a community depends for its state on the state of its ruler. If the ruler is a man of knowledge, statesmanship, courage and high purpose, he rules his nation with justice and creates better living conditions for the masses. If not, the opposite happens.

If the ruler is unjust and tyrannical, if disorder, misery and frustration prevail what is to be done? Afghan? says that if people in such a country have still some life in them, their leaders and representatives of public opinion will overthrow the ruler.<sup>2</sup> What means are to be employed for overthrowing a bad ruler, Afghani does not make clear. However, Hourani says that Afghani did not belong to the quietist majority of Muslim thinkers who believed that they should protest against injustice but submit to it; he accepted rather the view of the minority who believed in the right of revolt.

In an article on the qualities necessary for the men of authority, Afghani makes a strong plea for the development of national patriotism. He says

that the defence, security and prosperity of a country does not depend upon the possession of strong forts, large armies, abundant gold and weapons of high quality. All these things are, no doubt, necessary but far more important are the qualities of men who are in authority. It is only experienced, wise and good men who can run the affairs of a country with justice, establish peace and ensure the prosperity of its people. But even these qualities are not enough. The rulers and men in authority should love their countrymen and have compassion for them.

Afghani further believes that the salvation of the Muslim community could not come from virtuous rulers alone. There was no short cut to the regeneration of Islam. Newspapers by themselves could not do it; schools could not do it, although they could do something to raise the standard of public morality and spread the idea of unity. There could be no real reform of Islam unless the 'ulama' returned to the truth of Islam, and the community as a whole accepted it and lived in accordance with it. But what is the truth of Islam?

This is the question to which, in the last analysis, all al-Afghani's thought is directed. In his treatment of it we are aware of a new element in Islamic thought. He is addressing himself not only to his fellow Muslims to rescue them from the false ideas in which they have so long been sunk; he is also talking, beyond the umma, to the learned world of Europe. He wishes both to destroy false views of Islam held by Muslims and criticisms of Islam made by Europeans. When he maintains that only by a return to Islam can the strength and civilization of Muslims be restored, he does so the more emphatically because it had become a commonplace of European thought that religion in general, and Islam specifically, sapped the will and restricted reason, and progress was only possible by

abandoning it, or at least by making a sharp separation between religion and secular life.

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## Glossary

**Ahl al-hal wa al-'aqd:** people who loose and bind; i.e. electors, the elite

**Allah:** God

**Amir:** ruler, prince, governor of province

**Badr:** the first war in Islamic History between Muslims and the Meccan

**Bay'a:** oath of allegiance to Khalife

**Bid'a:** innovation

**Fatwa:** an authoritative opinion issued by a mujtahid on a matter of law

**Fiqh:** Islamic jurisprudence

**Hadith:** a saying attributed to the Prophet

**Hadras:** 'Presence' used broadly by mystics as synonym of hudar, being in the presence of Allah. Derwishes call their regular Friday service 'hadra'

**Infatih:** economic liberalization or open door policy

**Imam:** there are three significant meanings for this title: (1) the leader of a group of praying Muslims, (2) a general title for any Muslim leader with some religious authority: (3) in Shi Islam, the title of the rightful, divinely guided ruler. In the Shii tradition there is a line of succession to the Imamate from the Prophet Muhammad through his cousin and son-in-law, Ali

**Jamaa't:** association or Islamic groups

**Jahilliya:** ignorance, refers to the period of pre-Islamic civilization

**Jihad:** sacred struggle

**Khalafah:** the institution of government legitimized by succession of the Ruler from the Prophet

**Khalife:** successor of the Prophet; temporal leader of the umma in the Sunni doctrine

**Khawarij:** an early schismatic puritanical movement that rejected claims to inherent superiority by the members of the Prophet tribe

**Khedive:** name given to the ruler of Egypt from 1867 to 1914. He governed as semi-independent viceroy of the Sultan of Turkey

**Khutba:** sermon delivered in a mosque at the Friday congregational prayer

**Mahdi:** the title of the divinely guided figure who is expected to come in the last days and establish the rule of the God on earth

**Madrasah:** the traditional theological college or seminary of the Islamic sciences

**Majlis al-Shura:** consultative council

**Maktab:** an elementary religious school

**Masjid:** place of prostration, center for Muslim worship

**Mawlid:** time, place and celebration of birth of any one, particularly of the Prophet Muhammad. The mawlid as the finest expression of reverence for Muhammad has found almost general recognition in Islam, as fulfilling a religious need of the people and as a result of strength of the Sufi movement

**Mufti:** a religious official of the Sunni rite with the authority to issue authoritative opinions in matter of Islamic Law

**Mulla:** a lower-ranking clergyman

**Namaz:** religious prayer

**Qur'an:** record of the revelation Muslims believe were sent to mankind through the messenger of God, Muhammad

**Ramadan:** the Holy month of Islam

**Salaf:** the pious ancestors who lived at the time of Muhammad and the Rashidun Caliphs are called the Salaf

**Salaffiyah:** in the twentieth century, reformers in the tradition of Muhammad Abduh have been called Salaffiyah because they called for a return to the principles followed by the Salaf

**Shahada:** Muslim declaration faith in God and the Prophethood of Muhammad

**Shari'a:** religious law(s); the correct Islamic path for Muslims to follow

**Shaykh:** this term can apply to a tribal leader, a religious teacher, a ruler, or head of institution

**Shaykh-ul-Islam:** an honorific title for important Muslim scholars. It is the title of the highest official in the government structure of Islamic schools and courts.

**Shura:** a council

**Sufi(sm):** this dimension of Islam stresses the immanence of God. It manifests itself as the Islamic form of mysticism

**Sultan:** a secular ruler of the Islamic community

**Sunna:** the tradition of the Prophet's behaviour and practice

**Ulama:** the learned men of the religious law of Islam, Muslim scholar, jurist

**Umma:** the Islamic community

**Wahhabism:** the puritanical movement led by Abdul-al-Wahhab in 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Arabia

**Waqf (plural: Awqaf):** religious endowments